

Indigenous Eye Health Newsletter June 2016

Good News for People with Diabetes

New MBS (Medicare) items for non mydriatic retinal photography for people with diabetes was announced in the federal budget on 3 May.

Professor Taylor has been working towards this initiative since 1994... and was delighted to receive the news, even after 22 years! 'I am sure this will be a real game changer for people with diabetes in mainstream and for Indigenous people. They say "success has many parents and that failure has but one" and in this case I know many have helped along the way and it is wonderful to see all this effort reach fruition.'

We understand the Department of Health has funded an audit and is providing funding for the necessary equipment and training in Aboriginal Health Services.

The new MBS items will be available from 1 November 2016 and support GPs and diabetologists to capture and grade retinal images for people with diabetes.

This additional screening complements activities currently provided by optometrists and ophthalmologists and is designed to increase retinal screening rates for Indigenous people from a very low 20% and non Indigenous people from 50% per year.

Up to 98% of the blindness from diabetes is preventable with early detection and timely treatment and every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person with diabetes needs to have their retinae reviewed each year, every two years for non Indigenous people.



Non mydriatic retinal photography - the new MBS item is a game changer

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International Trachoma Visit to Papunya & Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff)

In April this year a group of International delegates (on route to the GET2020 Meeting in Sydney) visited Central Australia with Professor Hugh Taylor.



The visit included a trip to the remote communities of Papunya and Ikuntji together with staff from IEH, Fred Hollows and CDC, NT. The delegates visited schools, childcare facilities, art centres and observed and discussed the various initiatives in place to help eliminate Trachoma in remote Australia.



In Papunya the school demonstrated the morning hygiene routines while in Ikuntji a community meeting was held with 10-15 community members about the barriers the community face in preventing and eliminating Trachoma. Milpa made an appearance in each community to the delight of the children.



As well as the remote communities visited, the delegates attended a dinner and excursion at Desert Park (some enjoyed the Kangaroos) and a presentation at Alice Springs Hospital by Dr Tim Henderson (Ophthalmologist) & Paula Wines (CDC NT Trachoma Program Coordinator).



CHECK TODAY. SEE TOMORROW

'Check Today, See Tomorrow' (CTST) Diabetes Eye Care UPDATE

The 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' (CTST) diabetes eye care resources have been freely available since their launch in November 2015 for Aboriginal Health Services, community health, hospitals, Primary Health Networks (PHN), and other organisations to access, download and order through our website.

Almost 200 CTST kits have been ordered by request to date, covering every state and territory in Australia, and reaching as far as the Torres Strait Islands.

We have been fortunate enough to receive additional funding from the Commonwealth and the Aspen Foundation for the reprinting and distribution of the resources to support this high demand.

Supporting the Roadmap's regional activities

The CTST resources are invaluable in supporting the regional implementation of the Roadmap where the resources and key messages are being integrated into routine care of people with diabetes to support the need for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes get their eye checked YEARLY.

IEH is facilitating a series of 'how-to' sessions in seven regions that are implementing the recommendations of the Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision to support better eye health outcomes.



Primary health care staff attending a CTST 'how-to' Session at Dhauwurd-Wurrang, Victoria. February 2016.



Jack's Story- 'Following Treatment'. A series of personal stories have been created to provide a resource for other people to listen first hand to the effect diabetes has had on an individual.

Adaptations and new CTST resource development

Some of the adaptations and new CTST diabetes eye care resources that are now available include:

- New larger A2 size poster series
- Diabetes eye care personal story video series
- 'Promoting Regular Eye Checks' (MBSItem715) video
- New CTST t-shirt design that can be customised with your own logo

(the t-shirt and other CTST branded merchandise is available to order at a cost)



New 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' t-shirt design available to customise and order.

IEH encourage the use of the CTST resources to support diabetes eye care health promotion through awareness events and activities organised by local community groups and through health promotion initiatives in primary care settings.

If you require further information, support or to order more CTST kits and individual kit items, please contact us:

e: Indigenous-EyeHealth@unimelb.edu.au or

w: www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au/diabetes-eye-care/resources

Follow us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/CheckTodaySeeTomorrow

and share your community activities, events and stories.

Government Funding

IEH were delighted to learn in early March of a further three years of activity funding support from the Australian government for 2016-2017 to 2018-2019. Senator the Hon Fiona Nash, Minister for Rural Health, announced the \$2.5 million in funding for providing expert advice to the Department of Health, developing Indigenous eye care resources, providing technical support on trachoma control, and undertaking stakeholder engagement and support for the coordination of Indigenous eye care programmes and services.

'The funding will allow IEH to provide vital service, and also allow them to work with the sector on innovative and collaborative approaches to eye health,' Minister Nash said. This new tranche of funding follows a similar investment supported by both sides of politics, since 2013.

Additional Australian government funding was also received in April 2016 to print and deliver 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' diabetes eye care resources.

Trachoma Community Engagement

IEH, and Indigenous Hip Hop Projects (IHHP), with funding from the Department of Health undertook three health promotion projects in remote communities over the past couple of months. The communities involved included Oak Valley in South Australia, Docker River in Northern Territory, and Warburton in Western Australia.

In each community we engaged with the schools, health clinics and CDP programs along with many other service providers and individual community members.



Each project involved the school children and community members in creating a health promotional music video about Trachoma. The themes within these music videos varied from basic prevention of Trachoma around clean faces, to talking about treatment of trachoma when needed, as well as the environmental factors that can become barriers to prevention such as the need for safe functional bathrooms and access to water for washing faces.

The engagement from the community was quite extraordinary and the IHHP team should be credited for their ability to engage and inspire people in their activities.



The music videos showcased some amazing talent that is readily found in the communities. Talent such as song-writing, dancing and singing were very evident, and was highlighted perfectly through music videos.

We also had the amazing IHHP dancers who worked tirelessly to give dancing lessons at the schools and encourage and empowered the children to put on a fabulous performance on the last night in each community together with the launch of the music videos.



Yipirinya School Footy Clinic

On Thursday 26th May Milpa, IEH and Melbourne Football Club along with NT Centre for Disease Control, NT AFL and Fred Hollows Foundation held a footy clinic at Yipirinya School in Alice Springs. Two Melbourne football players Angus Brayshaw and Liam Hulett were the star attractions at the clinic. The football clinics combine our important hygiene message: clean faces and strong eyes to stop trachoma together with the very popular AFL football.



Around 100 children participated in the clinic. Firstly, the children listened to information about trachoma and came up with ideas on how to keep faces clean: blowing your nose until its empty and washing your hands and face whenever they're dirty. The children then all had a turn of blowing their noses and washing their hands and face before receiving a Milpa tattoo. Footy activities with NT AFL and MFC then encouraged children to keep their faces clean, because strong eyes will help them get those footy goals and marks!



(top) Milpa, Jacqui Arnold (CDC) and Jill Robertson (IEH) talking about clean faces and hands at Yipirinya school. (above) children at the hygiene stations.

To view the music videos from Oak Valley, Docker River and Warburton visit our website:
www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au

(below) IHHP Artist Matt Adnate, painted a beautiful mural on the wall outside the community store in Warburton WA.

Roadmap regional implementation update

Regional implementation

Activity in regional implementation progresses across the country. IEH continues to provide technical advice and support to some 15 identified regions and occasional advice to other regions and providers.

The key enablers of stakeholder meetings and the sharing and monitoring of data characterise successful progress in the regional approach.

The 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' resources are now also providing additional resources to the regional implementation toolkit.

There has also been a recent increase in jurisdictional activity with Victoria, South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia having established or in the process of establishing state/territory Indigenous eye health committees.

Regional implementation highlights:

Great South Coast region, 'seeing through a cultural lens'

The Barwon South West project ran a cultural tour 'Seeing through a cultural lens' at Tower Hill on 17 January. This event was well attended by key services including optometry, ophthalmology, hospital and ACCHO staff and their families. It provided a great opportunity for networking and building on local partnerships in Indigenous eye health across the region.



Great South Coast eye project stakeholder group enjoying a cultural tour on Tower Hill, SW Victoria in January 2016

South Australian Aboriginal Diabetes Strategy Collaborative Forum

IEH attended the SA Aboriginal Type 2 Diabetes Strategy Forum coordinated by the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) on 28 April.

The consultation document under this strategy includes important recommendations on Diabetic Retinopathy based on the approaches outlined in the Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision.

Yamba and Milpa

In April and May Yamba & Milpa's Roadshow visited the following communities:

- Ampilatwatja
- Alekareng (Ali-Curung)
- Wuntunugurra (Epenarra)
- Elliot
- Tennant Creek
- Owairtilla (Canteen Creek)
- Alpururulam (Lake Nash)
- Wilora
- Willowra
- Laramba
- Yuelamu



Yamba, Milpa and Jacinta having a brilliant time!

Staff Update

We welcome three new staff this year: Nick Schubert started in the role of Senior Research Fellow in Roadmap Implementation with IEH in January. Nick has a background of rural health workforce reform, policy and program delivery across Australia at community, state and national levels.

Jill Robertson based in Alice Springs joined us in February as our Trachoma Health Promotion Coordinator. Jill has a nursing background and has run her own business and coordinated and delivered alcohol and quit smoking programs with many Northern Territory remote communities.

Emily O'Kearney started at IEH in April as Research Assistant in trachoma health promotion. She has a background in disability and has worked in the Indigenous and Global health fields.

We would also like to farewell Roman Zwolak. Roman worked in a project support role as part of the regional implementation team and we thank him for his contribution and wish him all the best with his work back in the community sector.



Jill Robertson in the new Trachoma 'Clean Faces, Strong Eyes' Troop in Alice Springs, May 2016.