

Indigenous Eye Health Newsletter November 2016

We are nearly there ...

The National Eye Health Survey (NEHS) was launched on World Sight Day, 13th October. The NEHS is the first national survey to determine the prevalence and major causes of blindness in Australia and was prepared by Vision 2020 Australia and Centre for Eye Research Australia. **The gap for blindness has been halved from six times to three times.** Vision loss is still three times but great progress is being made by many partners and contributors. What we recommend is really making a difference and we are nearly there but we have more work to do.

NEHS is available at www.vision2020australia.org.au

The 2016 Annual Update

The 2016 Annual Update on the Implementation of The Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision was released at the RANZCO Annual Congress in Melbourne on 21 November. The 2016 Annual Update was launched by Ms Patricia Turner AM, CEO of NACCHO, and marks the fifth update of the Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision.

A number of exciting milestones have been reached, 62% of 139 steps outlined in the Roadmap recommendations have now been completed,



together with a total of 11 out of 42 recommendations being fully implemented.

Significant progress has been made in 2016 through the collective efforts of the many stakeholders working in Indigenous eye health.

The update highlights important funding and policy contributions from the Commonwealth and notes the recently released National Eye Health Survey 2015-2016. A number of Roadmap recommendations are to be completed and future work also involves the geographic expansion of Roadmap regions. Funding of the Medicare item number for diabetic retinopathy screening from November is regarded as a 'game changer' to facilitate regular eye checks for Indigenous adults with diabetes.

Another critical initiative is the establishment of jurisdictional Indigenous eye health committees encouraged through fundholder coordination programs.

There remains excellent engagement from the Aboriginal health and eye health sectors to complete implementation of the Roadmap recommendations and close the gap for vision.

Photo L-R: A-Prof Mark Daniell Pres-elect RANZCO, Pat Turner AM CEO NACCHO, Prof R Hugh Taylor AC Indigenous Eye Health

The 2016 Annual Update is available at www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au

IEH Roundtable and Forum

IEH has hosted two national stakeholder events in the second half of 2016, one to prepare for the introduction of the new Medicare items for non-mydriatic retinal photography and the second a forum for fundholders in Indigenous eye health looking at surgery and coordination initiatives.

The 'Non mydriatic retinal photography – a roundtable in preparation for new MBS items for people with diabetes' was held on 25 July 2016. This meeting brought together representatives from peak national bodies across Australia, covering Indigenous health, eye care and diabetes, to discuss approaches and actions necessary to support the new MBS items.

The items are available for use from 1 November 2016 with a \$33.8 million budget allocation over four years.

On 4 October 2016, IEH held a 'Fundholder Forum for Indigenous Eye Health'. The Forum provided an opportunity for jurisdictional fundholders to share experiences, approaches and outcomes from their Indigenous eye care outreach programs.

Fundholders described their recent experiences with new eye (and ear) surgery funds that have provided additional cataract and other eye care surgical support for Indigenous communities across Australia. Plans for improved co-ordination of Indigenous eye care services were presented from each jurisdiction and demonstrated a variety of approaches to this initiative.

Fundholders identified that a nationally consistent approach to the Indigenous eye health needs assessment component of their service planning would be advantageous and that this should include co-ordination between the different outreach eye programs. There was also interest from fundholders in developing a performance framework, with key performance indicators, that could be used to support Indigenous eye care outreach funding.



The full Roundtable and Forum reports are available on the IEH website: www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au

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Katherine West Health Festival with Sean Choolburra

IEH partnered with the Katherine West Health Board (KWHB) for the Katherine West Health Festival in September. Aboriginal comedian and dancer Sean Choolburra toured with KWHB and IEH staff to eight communities in the Katherine West Region performing at schools and in the community.



Katherine West have recently incorporated these messages along with clean faces messages with their health promotion efforts on smoking reduction in the performances.



Sean Choolburra used comedy, dance and didgeridoo playing in his performances to engage with community members. Milpa made an appearance in each community and even had a dance-off with Sean to Sean's "Gammin Style" (Gangnam Style remix). At the school shows, IEH and KWHB staff spoke about trachoma and smoking respectively.

The remaining Coles' hygiene bags were handed out at the schools together with 500 toothbrushes and toothpaste donated by Colgate.

Before the community event, a hygiene station was set up with soap, water, mirrors, paper towel, bin, cold water and fruit. More than 1000 people attended the event and there were many laughs, lots of dancing and some important health talks from elders and KWHB members.

A videographer will create a 10-minute compilation video to document the event and serve as a health promotion video.

Thanks to the efforts of many, trachoma rates are down from 21% in 2008 to 4.6% in 2015 (78% decrease) But there is still more work to do as hot spots remain (NTSRU 2016)



Milpa and the Jimmy Little Foundation in the APY Lands making a healthy lifestyle music video.

Updates to Diabetic Retinopathy Grading Course

IEH has recently updated the Online Self-Directed Diabetic Retinopathy Grading Course to improve the learning experience for users.

This educational tool is designed for primary health practitioners and support staff involved in retinal screening for patients with diabetes wishing to grade retinal changes associated with diabetes.

It is currently available in six languages (English, Chinese, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Urdu) and follows the International Council of Ophthalmology and the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines for diabetic eye care.

The course is organised in several parts and includes a practice quiz for each section. A competency based examination evaluates the ability to accurately detect and grade diabetic retinopathy including macular oedema.

The updated course is appropriate for practitioners and clinics considering uptake of the new MBS items for non mydriatic retinal photography. The course provides competence to grade retinopathy and determine appropriate referral when retinopathy is detected.



New features include:

- All images now have a zoom feature, allowing easier identification of diabetic retinopathy signs
- The examination has been separated into three shorter assessments, so as to allow registrants greater flexibility in approaching the exam
- Examinations can be repeated and the images are randomly assigned

A Certificate of Competency is awarded on successful completion of the examinations.

To access the course, please visit:
www.drgrading.iehu.unimelb.edu.au

IEH supports new jurisdictional co-ordination

IEH are very pleased to have recently been involved in new statewide co-ordination activity in both New South Wales and Queensland.

In 2016-17, the fundholders in each jurisdiction have been funded by the Commonwealth Government to provide state and territory-wide co-ordination in Indigenous eye care.

On July the 26th, IEH presented an overview of the Roadmap to an initial meeting of key stakeholders held by the NSW Rural Doctors Network. The aim of this meeting was to establish the NSW Indigenous Eye Health Advisory Group under the Co-ordination program.

The next day IEH also provided a three-hour presentation and training in the Roadmap to the regional co-ordinators and the new Indigenous Eye Health Co-ordinator with Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAICH), in partnership with the fundholder body, CheckUp.

Both of these initiatives are exciting steps towards successfully meeting the need for jurisdictional oversight and co-ordination in supporting the implementation of Roadmap recommendations.



Nick Schubert and Carol Wynne from IEH in Qld with QAICH and CheckUp coordinators and staff at the recent Roadmap presentation.

Delivering Diabetes Eye Care Education at the QAAMS Workshop

The 2016 Quality Assurance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Services (QAAMS) took place in Darwin in the Northern Territory on Wednesday 7 and Thursday 8 September.

The annual workshop attended predominately by Aboriginal Health Workers from across Australia, provided a fantastic opportunity to highlight the new Medicare items for non-mydratic retinal photography starting November 1 and education on diabetes eye care using the new 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' resources.



Lions Supporting IEH

The Lions Eye Health Program – Australia is generously supporting the work of IEH with a grant of \$50,000 to advance the development and piloting of clinic management software improvements to support diabetes patient care in primary care clinics, especially Aboriginal Medical Services.

This work will enable specific flags and prompts for clinicians in primary care settings and the ready assembly of clinic level data to ensure retinal screening for people with diabetes.

A trial is planned of the software developments which can then be considered for national roll out. Lions are also supporting the printing of additional 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' diabetes eye care resources suitable for mainstream general practice settings and pharmacies.

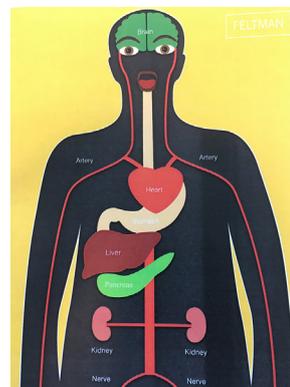
'Check Today, See Tomorrow' carries the important message of annual eye examinations for Indigenous people with diabetes and Lions Clubs participating in this work will distribute the resources in their regions to complement the materials already used in Aboriginal Medical Services.



Prof Hugh Taylor AC, Colin Thomas, Carol Wynne, Faye Clarke, Jack Walker and Levi Lovett at the Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference, November 2016.

Launch of New Feltman Eye Add-on Resource

IEH, who were part of the Technical Advisory Group for the Feltman Eyes resource, were delighted to attend its launch on World Diabetes Day on November 14 at Diabetes Victoria in Melbourne.



Feltman Eyes, an add-on resource to the popular Feltman developed by the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) and Diabetes Victoria is to be used by Aboriginal health workers for teaching about prevention and management of diabetes-related eye complications.

For further information, visit Diabetes Victoria at: www.diabetesvic.org.au

MFC's Indigenous Eye Health Ambassador supports Murrumbidgee Statewide Footy and Netball Carnival

The State wide NAIDOC Footy and Netball Carnival was held in Bendigo on October 15 and 16 providing an opportunity to build on our ongoing partnership with Melbourne Football Club (MFC) and promote diabetes eye care awareness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Victoria.

MFC's Indigenous eye health ambassador Neville Jetta featured in a collaborative promotional video for the Carnival which included health prevention messages from our 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' diabetes eye care campaign and VACCHOS's Sports Drinks are Gammin! Campaign.

A set of supporting 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' posters featuring Neville was also produced for further promotion during the Carnival event.

IEH look forward to supporting and collaborating on eye health promotion and awareness at this great statewide event again next year.



The MFC video and supporting 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' posters are available to view/download from our website: www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au



Yamba and Milpa Roadshow with Jacinta Price visiting Kintore school, NT



Like our Trachoma Facebook page
Clean Faces, Strong Eyes
www.facebook.com/cleanfacesstrongeyes

Diabetes Eye Care Facebook page
Check Today See Tomorrow
www.facebook.com/CheckTodaySeeTomorrow

New 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' TV and Radio Ads Available

A variety of broadcast-quality TV and radio ads have been produced in conjunction with Goolarri Media Enterprises in Western Australia as part of the suite of 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' diabetes eye care resources.

The TV and radio ads are freely available (mp3/mp4 and other formats) to be used on local community radio, regional TV, played on a waiting room TV system, shared on social media and/or during community events and activities.



The TV and radio ads aim to support regional and local level activities to promote awareness on diabetes eye care and encourage YEARLY eye checks for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes.

The new ads supplement four personal stories available as videos on the IEH website. The individual stories include messages on looking after your eyes; following treatment; losing your sight to diabetes; and supporting a family member with diabetes to get their eyes checked. They provide first hand insight to the effects diabetes has on an individual.

For more ideas, information, or to view/download the TV and radio ads, please visit our website: www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au

Staff Update

We welcome Georgina Phillips, Trachoma Health Promotion Coordinator based in Alice Springs and Philip Roberts, Research Fellow working on Roadmap implementation to IEH. We farewell Jill Robertson with thanks for her contribution and wish her all the best for the future.

Thank You

Indigenous Eye Health would like to take this opportunity to thank the many community members, colleagues and stakeholders who have been part of and supported our work in 2016.

We would also like to acknowledge our generous donors and funders including: The Harold Mitchell Foundation, the Ian Potter Foundation, the BB & A Miller Foundation, CBM Australia, the Cybec Foundation, the Aspen Foundation, the Australian Government Department of Health and private donors.

We would also like to thank our Advisory Board for their leadership and guidance.