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Conference program shaping up for bright future for rural health

The program for the 12th National Rural Health Conference next April is being developed from abstracts received for research reports, workshops and colloquiums.

The Conference’s call for abstracts is in effect a point-of-time audit of contemporary issues influencing health and wellbeing of people in rural and remote areas. At the close of the call last week 480 abstracts had been received. They revealed the strong commitment to improving health that exists in rural and remote communities. Over 50 abstracts deal with the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Others confirm ongoing concerns about chronic conditions including mental health, cardio vascular disease, poor oral health and diabetes.

Strong Commitment, Bright Future is the theme of the Conference to be held in Adelaide 7-10 April 2013. The Conference is about current opportunities, new ideas and building on the wealth of existing experience for improving country health in the future.

The Conference program will provide many excellent opportunities for rural people to share their experiences and strategies for delivering successful health services in even the most remote locations.

It will feature arts and health activities developed in consultation with Country Arts SA. A National Framework for Arts and Health should be available for consideration by April and would provide a new policy centre piece for joint activity in both the arts and the health sectors to support better community and individual health.

The Conference is likely to include specific focus on successful health promotion in rural and remote areas relating in particular to smoking and healthy ageing. Another priority for consideration is how best to deliver the potential for eHealth to strengthen health services and provide additional support for rural people, without increasing isolation through bypassing face-to-face care. Monitoring the effectiveness of health reforms for country people will also be on the program, particularly in regard to Medicare Locals, small hospitals and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

You can keep in touch with all 12th Conference developments at the Conference website via www.ruralhealth.org.au

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