PSA Rural Special Interest Group Report

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Background
PSA is the peak national professional pharmacy organisation representing Australia’s pharmacists working in all sectors and across all locations. The core business of PSA is practice improvement in pharmacy through the provision of continuing professional development and practice support. PSA provides an extensive program of education and professional development activities for pharmacists and intern pharmacists, and develops professional guidelines, standards and codes through its role as a standards-setting body for the profession.

PSA maintains its own Rural Special Interest Group which provides a forum for PSA members to discuss issues of relevance and to develop appropriate policy and other solutions in order to achieve improved health outcomes for consumers together with sustainable models of pharmacy practice in rural, regional and remote Australia.

PSA is undertaking a number of collaborative activities with other health professionals that are aimed at the greater involvement of pharmacists in the health care team. In 2013 the practice guidelines for the provision of immunisation services within pharmacy have been developed by the PSA for pharmacists and pharmacies involved in hosting immunisation services. PSA has developed a framework for pharmacists as partners in mental health care in partnership with mental health consumers, carers and care coordinators, mental health policy and practice experts, pharmacists, general practitioners, psychiatrists, psychologists and mental health nurses.
Rural Special Interest Group (SIG)

- Rural SIG Advisory group has met by teleconference 09/12, 12/12, 02/13, 04/13, 06/13, 09/13
- Rural SIG Advisory group met Face to Face in Brisbane, October 2013
- Membership has grown from 330 in July 2012 to 350 September 2013
- Rural pharmacy newsletter to be sent quarterly to all Rural SIG members
- Collaboration with ARHEN, RPLO network, SARRAH, NACCHO
- Advocating to PGA, DoH re changes to Home Medicines review program which disadvantage rural and Aboriginal patients
- Sponsorship of the Rural session at the Pharmacy Australia Congress
- QUMAX Reference Group membership
- Advocating for pharmacists to be included in MSOAP-ICD teams. Now have funding for pharmacists to deliver services to Aboriginal communities in Cape York, Wilcannia and Pilbara.
- Contract signed October 2013 with DoH for update to Guidelines for Provision of Pharmacy Services to Aboriginal People (6 month project to commence Jan 2014?)
- Drafting rural pharmacy recommendations report for DoH & PGA to inform decisions re rural programs for 6th Community Pharmacy Agreement

PSA submissions relevant to rural issues have included:

- Submission to the Treasury on the Government’s proposal to introduce a $2,000 cap on deductions for work-related educational expenses.
- Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Committee Inquiry into the Supply of Chemotherapy Drugs such as Docetaxel
- Submission to Federal Budget for a “Pharmacist Anti-Coagulation Service” and a “Collaborative Care Plan Model focusing on improved self-monitoring and medication adherence for diabetes”.
- Election 13: Call to action on Chronic Disease - make better use of pharmacists’ skills and knowledge

Written: October 31, 2013