

## Health Report: National Council for Women Queensland

July 2011

Queensland continues to feel the effects of recent floods and other disasters. The full effect is really taking its toll on individuals and families as they struggle to negotiate the rebuild process. The generosity of people has been wonderful but it does not take away the absolute devastation experienced by some people in the loss of life, income and property. The community continues to rally and support people. The National Council of Women Queensland is one such group who has a 'Pamper Day' planned for the women at Ipswich. All the efforts, big and small contribute to the overall improvement in people's lives.

### Post flood health concerns

Aside for the concerns of the mental health of individuals traumatized as a result of the recent flood and cyclone, the issue of exposure to asbestos by those individuals who assisted in the cleanup has been raised in the media. We will follow this issue and hopefully report on this in the future.

### Hendra virus

The recent outbreak of Hendra virus and the contraction of the disease by a dog on a property South of Brisbane have created a new level of alarm in the community about this virus and the mode of spread. This bat borne disease is known to be transmitted to humans and horses via the excretions of the bats. Community alarm has been reported as people now have concerns about colonies of bats living close to residential housing and that dogs may spread it to humans amplifying the risk to dog owners.

The Hendra virus, known by this name as it was the suburb that the first cases of the virus were noted. In September 1994 a well known horse trainer and 14 horses died from the virus at Hendra, QLD. There have been at least 14 more reported cases since this time. In response the CSIRO have developed a test for the virus and this is offered to anyone who has been in contact with the infected horses. A vaccine has been developed and used to date. ([www.csiro.au/science](http://www.csiro.au/science))

In response to the latest outbreak where there is now a transmission to another species, the NSW and QLD government have increased the funding to research in this area fourfold and efforts have been made to increase public knowledge of the symptoms of the illness for early recognition and treatment. ([www.UPI.com](http://www.UPI.com))

### Mental health

Mental health services have been boosted by the federal government with Medicare funding for Mental Health Nurses working in a primary health care setting untouched in the most recent budget. Mental health of Queenslanders has been tested in recent times and I am sure we will feel the impact of events on stress and anxiety levels in years to come. We can only encourage anyone who is experiencing any difficulty to seek support through the various agencies such as Lifeline, and through their General Practitioner (GP) accessing a Mental Health management plan that make available visits to Psychologists, Mental Health Nurses and other allied health staff under Medicare arrangements.

## Maternity services

Midwifery services and maternity hospital beds continue to be of concern and the state government is continuing to seek consumer and professional opinions on models of care and the development of treatment guidelines. Anyone interested in assisting in this important project can make contact to Jennifer Burton on 31316781 or email [Jennifer\\_burton@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Jennifer_burton@health.qld.gov.au).

## Children's Hospital at Woolongabba

This super hospital initiative that will combine the resources of Royal Children's and Mater Children's Hospital progresses and is due to open in 2014. It is difficult to ascertain how the State Government has taken on community concerns expressed in action taken around the announcement of this project. There has been a community input through the QCH Family Advisory Council but there does not seem to be much evidence of community input beyond this.

## New Medicare initiative – Medicare Locals

No news on the Medicare locals, it is hoped we can provide more information next report. There has been movement with the Queensland Health Districts with some districts starting the Board member recruitment process. The initiative of Queensland Health is a movement toward localized management of health services to

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