**VRCHN update**

**Changes to the VRHCN manager position**

It has been a busy period for the VRHCN over the past few months. It was with great sadness that we said farewell to Ms Jenny Soding who resigned as Manager VRHCN to take up the role of Business Manager – Renal Services at Northern Health. On behalf of the VRHCN and the Leadership Group, we would like to thank Jenny for her dedication and enthusiasm to the role.

Dr Gill Smith has now been appointed as the new Manager VRHCN. Gill has most recently been working as the Project Officer to develop the dialysis pathway as part of the Network’s Renal Integrated Care Pathway project. Thank you too to Ms Alice Gleeson who was Acting Manager for several months.

**VRHCN Clinical Lead**

We also need to advise that that Rowan’s term as the Clinical Lead for the VRHCN will be finishing at the end of the year. An EOI process for a new Clinical Lead will be undertaken over the next month, and we hope that a number of you give consideration to applying for this role. The new Clinical lead will commence their appointment as of 1st January 2016.

**VRHCN work plan**

As you will see from the articles in the newsletter it has been a busy time for the Network over the past months. The Renal Integrated Care Pathway project is almost completed and will be included in the next newsletter. A lot of work has been happening in the area of renal supportive care (RSC) and the article on page 2 talks about some of the achievements to date. You will see that we are about to commence two new projects focussing on addressing some identified barriers to accessing transplantation and to develop an agreed and consistent framework for renal education.

Finally there are a number of professional development opportunities coming up over the next few months, and we hope that you are able to take advantage of some of these.

Thank you all for your great work and commitment to ensuring that our patients get the best possible care for their kidney disease.

*Gill Smith*  
Manager, VRHCN

*Prof Rowan G Walker*  
Clinical Lead VRHCN
Renal supportive care

What happens if dialysis and transplantation is not a suitable option for someone with failing kidneys?

Until recently there was no recognised and supported treatment option for people with end stage kidney disease (ESKD) for who dialysis or transplantation is not the patient’s preferred option.

How did we investigate the issue?

In 2012 the VRHCN Leadership Group recognised this as a major issue for Victorians and established a RSC Working Group to provide advice, direction and guidance on the issues related to RSC to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Extensive consultation with a broad range of clinicians, consumers found that there was no streamlined pathway or model of care for people with ESKD or whom a decision had been made (medical advice, patient preference or a combination of medical advice and patient preference) not to have dialysis or transplantation.

How did we respond to the problem?

It was agreed that a RSC pathway in Victoria was required as it would assist people with ESKD access appropriate supportive care education and services in a timely and equitable way and to help guide and support the state wide approach to this treatment option.

However, we also realised that for any RSC pathway to be implemented, there needed to be some capacity building within health services. In 2014 the DHHS committed $590k for RSC capacity building across the ten major renal services in Victoria to:

- strengthen the relationships between palliative care and renal services
- support a review of educational and information resources for patients and clinicians
- to support change in the health service culture to recognise RSC as a clinically supported alternative to dialysis and transplantation.

This was further supported through funding to enable renal staff to participate in a Program for Experiencing the Palliative Approach (PEPA) placement to enhance their skills and understanding of palliative care.

We also introduced the concept of routine functional and symptom burden assessment of all renal patients over the age of 65 years using tools such as the Australia Modified Karnofsky Performance Scale and the POS-S Renal.

Where to from here?

All of Victoria’s renal hubs now either have, or are developing, their RSC capability that includes training and up-skilling staff and enhanced linkages between renal and palliative care services.

Through the capacity building initiatives, renal clinicians are now much more aware of the many benefits that RSC can provide patients and their families and are more comfortable referring patients to palliative care and having (the difficult) discussions around advance care planning and end-of-life needs.

Further work will be undertaken to embed RSC into routine renal care.

Key performance indicator audit

The VRHCN recently undertook an inaugural audit of the Renal KPIs. The VRHCN introduced six renal KPIs in 2012 aimed at improving service performance and outcomes for people with kidney failure.

This initial audit was undertaken in three of the major hub services (Melbourne, Austin and Alfred Health), with plans to audit other hub services in the future.

The audit was undertaken by Tony Skipper and Penny Paton, who are currently providing specific feedback to each of the participating health services and a report on the audit findings will be available in the near future.

Tony and Penny commented on how committed staff are to the collecting and reporting of the data and to ensuring its accuracy.
The audit was found to be a highly valuable undertaking and highlighted a number of systemic issues in the interpretation and reporting of the KPIs. Work will be undertaken over the coming months to address these issues.

On behalf of the VRHCN Leadership Group, the KPI Working Group and the DHHS, we would also like to acknowledge this commitment and the contribution this audit (and the KPIs in general) are making to system improvement and better care for patients.

The report will be made available once endorsed by the VRHCN Leadership Group.

For further information or a copy of the report contact Gillian Smith, Manager VRHCN:
Gillian.smith@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Renal forum – save the date

The next renal forum to be hosted by the renal health program will again provide an opportunity to discuss developments in the renal sector. A formal agenda will be provided closer to the date however some areas considered for discussion are:

- Review of Victoria’s renal health service system
- Renal Pathway project
- Renal KPIs

The forum will be of interest to all nephrologists, nurses, managers and allied health staff providing renal care in Victoria.

Further information and invitations will be sent around prior to the forum.

### Forum details

- **Date:** Wednesday 9th December 2015
- **Time:** 9.15am - 12.45pm
- **Location:** Room 1.01 and 1.02 Level 1, 50 Lonsdale St Melbourne

Please register your attendance by Tuesday 10 November 2015 by emailing your name, unit and contact details to:
renal@health.vic.gov.au

Note that numbers are limited.

Transplantation KPI 6 implementation project – EOI for project officer

This is an exciting new role working with the Victorian Renal Health Clinical Network (VRHCN) and across all major Victorian Renal services. The main aim of the role is to implement intervention(s) across transplanting and non-transplanting services which would overcome barriers or delays in the kidney transplant pathway.

The successful candidate will have experience in renal health and demonstrated experience in leading system wide change and implementation across a number of organisations. They will also have excellent analytical and communication skills and be organized, innovative, resourceful and highly motivated.

The role will be based at RMH; however will require several site visits to other renal services. It is 0.6 EFT fixed term for 12 months.

The position description can be found at:

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<tr>
<th>Please direct all queries to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maria Safe</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Nephrology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Royal Melbourne Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ph: 0429 962 617</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: maria.safe.mh.org.au</td>
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Renal education advancement project (REAP) – EOI for project manager

Applications are now being sought for a Project Manager for the Renal Education Advancement Project. The goals of this project are to develop a framework for education of people with chronic kidney disease and to develop a process of evaluation of the effectiveness of such education.

The position description can be found at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications and enquiries should be directed to the Chair of the REAP Work Group:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Matthew Roberts, Nephrologist</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Health Integrated Renal Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Matthew.Roberts@easternhealth.org.au">Matthew.Roberts@easternhealth.org.au</a></td>
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VRHCN Newsletter September 2015 Issue 2
Renal key performance indicators: Quarter 2 2015 report

The KPI Quarterly report for Quarter 2 2015 is now available. This is the ninth report and reviews data for the full year from July 2014 to June 2015.

The aim of the indicators is to drive service improvement and increase efficiency and consistency through the transparent comparison of agency performance.

The VRHCN leadership group formally endorsed the six KPIs in 2012 and data is collected monthly by the Department of Health and Human Services from all major renal services using a specifically designed website portal.

Feedback or comments on the report are welcome to ensure the report meets health services’ needs and provides a useful basis for renal service evaluation. Copies of the Victorian Renal KPIs Q2 2015 report can be obtained from Gregory Dowling at: gregory.dowling@dhhs.vic.gov.au.

Nursing and allied health scholarship and support scheme (NAHSSS)

The Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and administered by the Australian College of Nursing. The scholarships provide opportunities from undergraduate to postgraduate level to undertake further studies in an accredited nursing or midwifery course.

Funding is also available to assist nurses and midwives to further their careers through short courses, workshops or conferences.

Applications are now open and will close on 21 September 2015. Contact the NAHSSS for further information.

Victorian home therapies education day

Barwon Health, in collaboration with University Hospital Geelong and the Victorian Renal Health Clinical Network are pleased to invite you their Home Therapies Education Day. The aim is to help you learn more about trends in home therapies for people with chronic kidney disease and end stage kidney disease.

The program includes:

- Managing the transition from PD to HHD to Supportive care – John Agar
- Health Independence Program. What does it mean for people on home dialysis? – Justin Hamilton
- Applying adult learning principles effectively in home dialysis. – Karen Bennett
- Contributing to the research base: Why we need Nurse led research? – Donna Reidlinger

The day will also provide you with an opportunity share your home dialysis experiences as well as network with your colleagues.

Date: Thursday 22nd October 2015
Location: The Auditorium –Nursing Education Unit
Kitchener House, Ryrie Street, Geelong
RSVP: homehaemodialysis@barwonhealth.org.au
(Note that numbers are limited)

SONG-HD Delphi survey

Do you want to have a say on what outcomes should be measured and reported in haemodialysis research?

An international survey is being conducted to find out what effects of treatment and care (also known as outcomes) are important and relevant to patients on haemodialysis, family members, caregivers, and health professionals.
The survey will ask you to rate the importance of different outcomes in haemodialysis. This type of survey is called a Delphi survey as it is used to get everyone’s opinion and to try to reach agreement on the most important outcomes to be included in research for patients on haemodialysis.

You will be asked to complete three short online surveys about two weeks apart during September and October 2015.

The survey will tell us about what outcomes are important to you, and can help to ensure that haemodialysis research includes outcomes that are relevant to as many people as possible.

If you are interested in participating in this Delphi Survey, please register at: www.songinitiative.org

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to anyone else that might be interested.

To be added to or removed from the mailing list please email Gillian.smith@dhhs.vic.gov.au

If you have there is something that you would like included in the December 2015 newsletter, please forward the information through by 30th November 2015.

VRHCN key dates 2015

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<td>KPI Work Group</td>
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<td>23rd November</td>
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<td>Renal Forum</td>
<td>9th December</td>
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<td>Newsletter Issue 3</td>
<td>December 2015</td>
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