



Mallacoota District Health and Support Service Inc.

Community Newsletter - No:3 April 2007

The Mallacoota District Health and Support Service provides a diverse range of programs that are designed to meet the needs of individuals and groups within the community of Mallacoota, Gipsy Point, Genoa and district.

Most programs at the Mallacoota Health Centre are available to all members of the community on a fee-for-service basis, but concession fees are available to eligible clients. Programs offered at MDHSS which incur no charge are as follows: Family Counselling, Maternal and Child Health, Flexible Care packages, Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, Neighbourhood House support groups, Youth Services and Centrelink. A fees brochure is available at MDHSS.

Current Issues

Podiatry

The podiatry service offered by MDHSS has been temporarily suspended due to the absence of the podiatrist on leave. In the interim, MDHSS is taking action to replace this service.

Neighbourhood House Extensions

MDHSS was successful in its submission to the Department for Victorian Communities to undertake extensive modifications and ICT upgrades to the MDHSS Neighbourhood House. Building works will commence in the next few weeks and MDHSS would like to advise community members that the Neighbourhood House will be closing down for approximately 10 – 12 weeks.

The Centrelink Agency will be relocated to the Art room, and fortnightly forms can be left at Mattsson House reception for processing.

MDHSS looks forward to the new look Neighbourhood House / Telecentre and Centrelink Agency, and thanks everyone for their patience during the next few months.

Breast Screen Victoria – Mobile Screening Service coming to MDHSS

BreastScreen Victoria offers women aged 50 years and over the opportunity to have a free screening mammogram (breast x-ray) every two years for the early detection of breast cancer. Breast cancer is the most common cause of death from cancer in Victorian women. While all women are at risk of developing breast cancer, it is far more common as we grow older. More than 7 out of 10 breast cancers occur in women over 50 years old.

A BreastScreen mammogram every two years is the best way to find breast cancer early, and finding breast cancer early offers you the best chance of successful treatment and recovery.

The Mobile Screening Service will be at the Mallacoota Health Centre on 31st May to 8th June 2007. BreastScreen will be taking appointments from the last week in April 07.

To make an appointment for a free screening mammogram, call 13 20 50 or, for people with hearing or speech difficulties, call TTY 13 36 77.

Family Counselling Services

Psychologist Ms. Vivien Henderson, who is the MDHSS Family Counsellor, provides counselling for individuals, couples, families and children. The Family Counsellor assists people to look at new ways of handling problems and difficulties, and to build on existing relationships, and support parents and children. The Family Counsellor may assist with relaxation and stress as well as mediation and conflict resolution.

The Family Counselling service operates every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and is a *free* service to all members of the community. Appointments are necessary and can be made by contacting MDHSS reception on 51 580 243.

The Family Counsellor plans to offer a *Cancer Support Group* for people with cancer and their families. If there is an identified need, it is planned to conduct these sessions weekly at the Mallacoota Health Centre. People interested in participating in this support group, can contact the Program Coordinator Ms. Julie Scott on 51 580 243.

Current Issues continued

Diabetes

Diabetes is a condition that occurs when the body is unable to use blood GLUCOSE (sugar) effectively for energy. Diabetes occurs when the pancreas does not make enough insulin, or the body does not respond to the insulin that is made, leading to abnormally high levels of blood glucose called HYPERGLYCAEMIA.

Type 1 Diabetes - common signs and symptoms

Frequent urination, increased thirst and drinking, weight loss, tiredness and mood changes.

Type 2 Diabetes - common signs and symptoms

Often there are no signs. As with type 1 diabetes symptoms are frequent urination, increased thirst and drinking, weight loss, tiredness, as well as blurred vision, slow healing, skin infections, tingling and numbness of feet.

Gradual development of the condition diabetes Type 2 often results in symptoms not being noticed.

You can live well with diabetes with regular physical exercise, medication, self-monitoring of blood glucose, a healthy eating lifestyle and regular health checks.

There is a lot to know and understand about diabetes and it is natural at times to forget or need clarification on certain aspects of the condition.

MDHSS has a qualified diabetes educator, Ms. Mary Ann Brooker. If you would like to find out more about diabetes, or if you have any concerns about your condition, contact MDHSS to make an appointment to speak with Mary Ann.

Cnr. Mattsson Street & Genoa Road (PO Box 200)
Mallacoota 3892 - Telephone 51 580 243
Email: mdhss@vicnet.net.au
Web: www.mallacoota.org.au

Volunteer Training

Volunteers assist with a range of programs conducted by MDHSS. The volunteer program is central to the social welfare programs provided by the organisation.

Volunteers are active in driving the bus locally and out of town, assisting with kitchen duties, coordinating kitchen rosters, growing herbs and vegetables in the PAG garden, coordinating book club, supervising the walking programs, assisting with games and movie afternoons, assisting in the Neighbourhood House support groups, as well as transporting clients to medical appointments locally and out of Mallacoota.

Training for Volunteers is an important part of the Volunteer Program. Training provided to volunteers has included: Safe Food Handling, CPR, Microsoft Word and Excel.

A training program will be offered for Volunteers in Occupational Health and Safety in June 07 and August 07, and Driver Safety training will be offered in the near future.

MDHSS Independent Living Units

MDHSS manages five independent living units. The units (four one-bedroom and one two-bedroom) are located in MDHSS grounds. The units have maintained an occupancy rate of 75% during the past twelve months. Currently there is one vacancy.

The Independent Living Units are located within easy walking distance of the Mallacoota Health Centre and the local medical practice. Access to on-site health and support services is available. The units offer a flexible and comfortable lifestyle for people who wish to live without problems of maintaining a home.

Information about the independent living units may be obtained from MDHSS reception, or by telephoning MDHSS on 51 580 243.



Ongoing Programs

Community Aged Care Packages

MDHSS is funded to provide 10 Community Aged Care Packages. Currently, there are three vacancies.

This program assists people living in the community who have been assessed by the Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS) as eligible to receive low-level hostel care in the home. The care provided under this program is designed to meet specific needs of people living at home.

Services provided through this program include, case management, 24-hour emergency on call contact person, allied health services, meals, socialisation, personal care, home care and transport services.

People wishing to apply to be assessed for eligibility to enter this program could contact the Home Care Services Coordinator, Ms. Jennifer Griffiths at MDHSS on 51 580 633.

Men's Shed

MDHSS has been operating the Men's Shed since 2004 focusing on the health and well-being of men in the community. The project is aimed at men of all ages and provides a centralised meeting space where men have an opportunity to socialize with other men, engage in structured activities, share and gain skills and knowledge, gain access to health and support services, and to information relevant to them within the community.

Major activities have been providing a weekly trading table, mosaic classes, life skills sessions and a venue for Murrumbidgee Lions Club meetings. Further, members of the Men's Shed have built, repaired, and restored equipment and furniture for various community groups and individuals. The Men's Shed also offers a venue for weekly meetings of the MDHSS youth group.

Men's Shed Volunteers

MDHSS is seeking volunteers to assist in the functions of the Men's Shed. A volunteer is required to be available to open and close the shed, socialise with participants, assist with locating and using equipment, supervising and tidying up, and recording attendances.

The shed, located at the Murrumbidgee Health Centre, is open from 9 am to 3 pm. Volunteers can work in short blocks or long blocks.

Please contact the MDHSS Manager, Celia Wallace on 51580243 if you require any further information.

Volunteers are required to undergo a National Records Police Check.

Meeting Community Need through Multi-disciplinary Services

MDHSS provides support to people in the community using a multi-disciplinary team approach. Clients facing a problem are assessed and referred to a range of MDHSS services specific to the needs of the clients and /or their families.

It sometimes happens that people in the community in need are unaware of the diversity of services that they can access. The following case scenario is described to help show how MDHSS services could be utilized to assist an individual or a family in times of need. The case is hypothetical and does not refer to any particular client of MDHSS.

Case Scenario One

A family in the community has experienced a sudden financial loss. The family is trying to cope with daily living as well as trauma and depression. Depending on the individual circumstances MDHSS could offer the following services to assist:

- Transport Assistance
- Centrelink
- Family Counseling
- Emergency Relief Funding
- Advocacy Services
- Interpreter Services

Case Scenario Two

A community member has been discharged from hospital. Due to their illness, they are unable to return to work for a period of two months. Depending on the individual circumstances, MDHSS could offer the following services to assist:

- District Nursing
- Home Care
- Centrelink
- Meals on Wheels
- Advocacy
- Emergency Relief Funding
- Respite Care

Ongoing Programs

Planned Activity Group (PAG)

For a remote and isolated community like Malla-coota, activity groups are important for social well being, particularly for older people and people living alone. Activities offered through the PAG program are designed to provide clients with physical, social, intellectual and emotional stimulation. The PAG Program operates five days per week and includes some weekend excursions.

Regular activities for the year are as follows:

- Book Club (monthly)
- Bridge Club (weekly)
- Bus Trips out of Town (fortnightly)
- Meals (twice weekly)
- Gentle and Arthritis Exercises (weekly)
- Movie Afternoons (monthly)
- Tai Chi Classes (twice weekly)
- Walking Groups (weekly)
- Water Aerobics (weekly)

Palliative Care

MDHSS provides a coordinated team approach to deliver palliative care services to clients who choose to die at home. Comprehensive services are offered to clients and their carers, which include community nursing, allied health, home-based services, counselling, financial services, welfare, personal care, respite care, 24-hour short-term respite care, and provision of equipment.

Palliative care aims to alleviate problems that people may experience as their disease progresses (social, physical, emotional or spiritual). The team of professionals at MDHSS work alongside the Malla-coota Medical Centre to manage the day-to-day care, and to ensure that the client and their family receive the best care possible.



Regular Services

- Adult Community Further Education
- Centrelink Agency
- Community Aged Care Packages
- Community Nursing
- Delivered Meals
- Diabetes Management
- Disability Services
- Domiciliary Midwifery
- Emergency Relief Program
- Family Counselling
- Health Promotion
- Home Care
- Life Skills / Mentoring Program
- Men's Shed
- Neighbourhood House
- Occasional Child Care
- Palliative Care
- Podiatry
- Post Acute Care
- Physiotherapy
- Planned Activities Group (PAG)
- Play Group
- Postnatal Education and Support
- Property Maintenance
- Respite Care
- Speech Therapy
- Sexual & Reproductive Health Education
- Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)
- Support Groups
- Telecentre / Internet Access
- Youth Services

Visiting Services

- Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS)
- Audiologist
- BreastScreen
- Continence Nurse
- Drug & Alcohol
- Maternal & Child Health Nurse
- Occupational Therapy
- PapScreen
- Speech Therapy
- Thrifty Specs

MDHSS Community Reference Group

- President:** Dr. Michael Drake **Vice President:** Ms. Greta Jessup
Members: Ms. Lynne Casement, Sergeant Stuart Johnston, Ms. Annette Peisley, Dr. Jenny Schlager, Mr. Gordon Symons, Ms. Sue Williamson, Ms. Prue Wootton
Ex-Officio: Mr. Gary Gray (CEO, Bairnsdale Regional Health Service), Ms. Celia Wallace (Manager, MDHSS)

