

Staff Training - Manual Handling

Under Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Legislation, MDHSS is required to protect staff and clients from injury and to encourage work practices.

Recently, an Occupational Therapist, Ms Lisa Manser conducted a training session for Home Care workers called Manual Handling. This interactive session included a range of considerations and basic control measures for dealing with manual handling risk, such as; the need for staff to plan before undertaking any manual handling task, checking the physical environment in which the manual handling is to take place, considering the type of equipment to be used (eg. wheelchairs, vacuum cleaners, mops, buckets) and the capacity and skill level of staff.

Sometimes staff and clients are not always aware that the legislation, though at times appearing to be restrictive, is designed to protect everyone's health and welfare. Occupational Health and Safety legislation was discussed, in particular, the expectation under the Act, that workers share in the responsibility for OH&S.



Regular Services at MDHSS

Health Services:

- Home Care Services (home help, property maintenance, meals on wheels, personal care)
- Community Nursing
- Community Aged Care Packages
- National Respite for Carers Program
- Allied Health (podiatry, physiotherapy, dietitian, speech therapy)
- Family Counselling
- Health Promotion
- Dental Services
- Palliative Care/Post Acute Care
- Volunteer Transport Services
- Independent Living Units
- Maternal and Child Health
- Rural Allied Fly-in Service
- Men's Health Shed

Social Services:

- Planned Activity Group
- Emergency and Disability Services
- Youth Services

Community Services:

- Neighbourhood House
- Adult Community and Further Education
- Centrelink
- Occasional Child Care
- Telecentre

Visiting Services:

- Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS)
- Alzheimer's Australia
- Audiologist
- BreastScreen
- Continence Nurse
- Drug and Alcohol Counsellor
- Maternal and Child Health Nurse
- Occupational Therapy
- PapScreen
- Speech Therapy

The Community Reference Group

Mr Wayne Sullivan (CEO, MDHSS), Mr Tony Roberts (President), Mr Terry Houge (Vice-President), Ms Diana Appleton, Ms Greta Jessup, Dr Jennifer Schlager, Sergeant Andrew Scott, Ms Jennifer Warren, Ms Prue Wootton and Ms Celia Wallace (Manager, MDHSS)

The Community Reference Group meets bi-monthly and provides a forum for discussion and feedback between the community and MDHSS. Members of the community are encouraged to bring issues/concerns to members of the Community Reference Group

MALLACOOTA HEALTH CENTRE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 9 - February 2011

Mallacoota Health Centre

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, with concession fees available to eligible clients. Programs offered at MDHSS which incur no charge are as follows: Health Promotion, Family Counselling, Maternal and Child Health, Flexible Care Packages, Futures for Young Adults, Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, Neighbourhood House Support Groups, Youth Services, and Centrelink Services. A fees brochure is available at MDHSS.

COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP

A well attended MDHSS Community Reference Group meeting was held in February 2011, in the MDHSS Conference Room. The Chair, Mr Tony Roberts acknowledged the new members to the Reference Group, Ms Annette Peisley and Ms Jenny Warren.

The Manager presented to the meeting an outline of the recently agreed National Health Reforms, in particular the establishment of Medicare Locals. A major reason for the establishment of Medicare Locals is to ensure that communities are provided with appropriate primary health care services in order to reduce the need for people to attend hospital. The focus will be upon preventative health with a major initial focus on diabetes. Medicare Locals will work closely with local hospitals in order to coordinate appropriate primary health care.

The Manager has attended a series of meetings in Gippsland regarding these new reforms, including a meeting in Traralgon at which the Minister for Health, the Hon. Mr David Davies attended. It was pointed out that Mallacoota is somewhat unusual in comparison to other communities in that Mallacoota has no hospital, but has a medical practice, a health centre and an ambulance service who work in close co-operation with each other. The Mallacoota Health Centre provides after-hours health care for Department

of Veterans' Affairs clients and for Post Acute Care and Palliative Care clients, and the Medical Practice, as we are all aware, already operates a 24/7 after-hours service.

It could be argued that Mallacoota already has the basic components of a Medicare Local through the existing provision of services and close partnerships between the Mallacoota Health Centre, Mallacoota Medical Centre and the Mallacoota Ambulance Service. However, two differences exist in that Mallacoota does not have a hospital and health services are accessed across the border in NSW, and at times in Canberra. For example, for the financial year 2009/2010, MDHSS transported 78% of eligible clients to Bega in NSW, 12% to Canberra and 10% to Bairnsdale to attend medical appointments.

Ambulance records for 2010 indicate that 82% of patients were transported by ambulance to New South Wales (Pambula, Bega and Canberra) and 18% of patients transported by ambulance to Victoria. These figures do not include air ambulance transport.

In the area of diabetes health care, Mallacoota has for some time now promoted diabetes education, through the work of the MDHSS full-time nurse, Ms Mary Ann Whittaker, who is a qualified Diabetes Educator.



Mallacoota District Health & Support Service Inc.

HEALTH SERVICES

Staying Healthy in the Heat

Mallacoota has experienced some extreme heat days over the past few months and MDHSS would like to remind clients and community members, that if you are looking to escape the heat and cool down, the MIVA building is available during business hours, for people to come in and take a break in air-conditioned comfort. Please phone ahead on 51580243 as activities may be in progress.

Recently, MDHSS provided clients with publications entitled *Staying Healthy in the Heat*, published by the Victorian Department of Health, The Australian Red Cross publication *Emergency REDiPlan Household preparedness for Seniors book*, and a publication by CFA *Prepare, Act, Survive - Fire Ready Kit*. These publications provide useful information that may help people to prepare for the hazards of the summer season. Although the season is nearly over, these resources are available at the Health Centre for anyone in the community wishing to access them.

If you need help working through your emergency evacuation plan, MDHSS can provide assistance. If you would like assistance please contact MDHSS and one of our staff will visit you at home.

Diabetes Educator

For people who have or who are at risk of developing diabetes, they can learn about the disease and develop the skills they need to manage it through modified behaviour. The goal of diabetes education is to help people affected by diabetes maintain optimal health and improved quality of life.

A diabetes educator is skilled in communication and counselling in the areas of healthy eating (nutrition), being active (appropriate activity levels), glucose monitoring, taking medication, healthy coping and reducing risks, which is essential for improving health and quality of life for people affected by diabetes. Diabetes self-management education is integrated with clinical care as part of a therapeutic intervention to promote physical, social and psychological well being.

The full-time nurse at MDHSS (Ms Mary Ann Whittaker) is a Credentialed Diabetes Educator (CDE) recognised through the Australian Diabetes Educators Association (ADEA). Recognition as a CDE is ADEA's assurance to people with or at risk of diabetes, their families, carers and health care providers that they can expect to receive quality diabetes education and advice when consulting a CDE.

If you are affected by diabetes or you consider that you may be at risk of becoming diabetic, you are encouraged to contact Ms Mary Ann Whittaker at MDHSS, and an appropriate appointment can be arranged.

Community Nursing

During the holiday season, MDHSS received many enquiries from tourists and some locals requesting community nursing assistance, in particular dressings for minor injuries. MDHSS staff became

aware that many people may not realise the range of community nursing services available at MDHSS.

The MDHSS community nursing team offers a range of nursing services to residents, as well as to many visitors to the Mallacoota and district region who visit family and friends or who are tourists.

The nursing team provides care to the majority of clients drawn from the HACC program. Home care and centre-based care is available, with the majority of clients being provided care in their own homes.

The nursing team at MDHSS consists of one full-time nurse and two part-time nurses who cover weekdays and weekends as required. The largest component of direct clinical nursing is patient wound management.

The nursing team also undertakes clinical assessments, client referral, and venipuncture. MDHSS nurses provide palliative care, post-acute care and bereavement visits. Nurses undertake assessments under the 'Living at Home' program and health education programs.

Oral Health Program 'Smiles for Miles'



There are many reasons for promoting oral health in young children. Good Oral Health is an essential part of general health and wellbeing, yet it is not widely recognised by the general community. The *first or primary* teeth are important for young children to develop their eating ability, speech patterns, appearance and later, to guide the eruption and position of their permanent teeth (source: Dental Health Services Victoria).



MDHSS Health Promotion program in partnership with Mallacoota Kindergarten and the East Gippsland Primary Care Partnerships (EGPCP), will be promoting oral health at the MDHSS Occasional Childcare, MDHSS Playgroup and the Mallacoota Kindergarten. Trained staff will be utilising the *Smiles for Miles, Oral Health Promotion Resource Pack for Children's Services* in these settings.



MDHSS is looking forward to involving parents and carers in creating an environment which supports good oral health, by providing healthy snacks for children, input into the development of an oral health policy and encouraging children to *Eat Well, Drink Well, Clean Well and Play Well*.

Emergency Relief Program – Dental Services

The Emergency Relief Program for Dental Services ends 30 June 2011. This program was an 18 month contract and to date 43 community members have accessed the program, receiving treatment for emergency general dental services. With public dental waiting lists in Gippsland of 18 months to two years, this program was greatly appreciated by clients.

If anyone in the community with a health care card or pension card, who is in need of emergency dental care, they are strongly encouraged to contact MDHSS and seek assistance.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Being active is fundamental to health and well-being. It means exercising the mind and participating socially and culturally, as well as participation in physical activity. There are many life-style benefits to being active, some of which include: having a sense of vitality, feeling stronger, having increased concentration, enjoying a sounder sleep, prolonging independence and meeting and mixing with other people. Further, some of the health benefits associated with being active include: fewer aches and pains better posture, improved balance, preventing falls, weight management, building stronger bones and muscles, reducing the likelihood of diabetes, colon cancer, stroke and depression, and improving immune function, bowel movement and digestion.

MDHSS provides a range of activities to assist people to remain active and independent, such as Exercise Classes, Swimming at Pambula, Walking for Pleasure and a new program Pole Walking.

Exercise Classes

Every Monday the Home and Community Care (HACC), Planned Activity Group (PAG) program conducts Gentle Exercise (low impact) classes and Arthritis Exercises (Brain Dance) in the Hall at the Health Centre for HACC eligible people. HACC eligible people include: frail aged people, people with disabilities of all ages and their carers. Arthritis classes (Brain Dance) stimulates your brain with a series of gentle exercises to help re-organise the central nervous system, develop better balance, memory and motor skills.

Community members who are not in the HACC target group are welcome to join these classes if numbers permit. A small fee applies.

Swimming at Pambula

The MDHSS bus departs the Health Centre each Monday at 9.30am for the Pambula Swimming Pool. Participants have the opportunity to exercise in the pool and enjoy a day out of town. This social activity is both stimulating and provides a wonderful means of exercise for all who attend. Bookings are essential for this activity as numbers are limited.

Walk for Pleasure

The walking group leaves the Mallacoota Health Centre at 10am every Wednesday, and returns at approximately 2pm. Participants are required to bring a snack and a drink as part of this gentle activity. Volunteer Bob Semmens enlightens walkers with his vast knowledge of flora and fauna.

Nordic Walking Program - Pole Walking

MDHSS Health Promotion Program will be introducing Nordic Walking (Pole Walking) for community members in April 2011. The Health promotion nurse, Ms Nicola Gorwell is undertaking an accredited instructors training course in Melbourne and will be delivering this activity to interested community members.

Nordic Walking, as it is most commonly known around the world, is a low impact but highly effective total body workout which is suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels. It can be done in all seasons and over all terrains (from sandy beaches to country trails to urban footpaths). To achieve the excellent health benefits offered by Nordic walking, the use of specially designed poles (which are not the same as trekking or ski poles) and a learned technique is required.

What are the benefits?

Nordic Walking:

- Activates 90% of the body's muscles
- Gives a 20-25 % greater cardio fitness benefit than regular walking
- Burns up to 46% more calories compared to regular walking without poles
- Decreases the weight load and impact on the joints of the lower body
- Strengthens as well as tones the upper back and shoulders
- Gives a more intense workout but with lower perceived exertion
- Increases the lateral mobility of the spine
- Promotes an upright and balanced walking posture
- Improves co-ordination
- Releases pain and muscle tension in the neck and shoulders

So, what is Nordic Walking?

Nordic Walking is fitness walking using specially designed poles to create a low stress total body work out. It originated in Scandinavia as a summer training activity for cross country skiers. Want to come and try this easy and fun exercise that can be enjoyed by almost everyone? Then contact MDHSS reception on 51580243 to register your interest.

