

# PHC SIG Update

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## Special points of interest:

- Advocacy at the Sustainable Population Policy Round Table
- Upcoming conference and PHC SIG Workshop
- Medicare Locals
- Barbara Starfield
- Recent research
- SACHA Award
- Twitter

## Co-convenors' Welcome

Welcome to the Primary Health Care Special Interest Group for 2011.

It has been an exciting and interesting year so far, in the field of primary health care with Australia undertaking major health care reforms, with a focus on strengthening the primary health care system.

Our key priorities for this year are to promote comprehensive primary health care, monitor the federal health care reforms and the roll-out of Medicare Locals and support the goals of PHAA by improving net-

working opportunities between SIGs and State branches.

We aim to update and inform SIG members through a number of media, including this newsletter, emails and social networking tools (such as Twitter). If you have other ideas on how we can best maintain useful communication please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

This newsletter is a new format for the PHC SIG and we will aim to provide updates on our activities, policy and research high-

lights, membership profiles and other relevant information.

We welcome contributions and feedback from PHC SIG members at any time. Just send us an email.

**Jo Walker & Rachel Tham**

*Co-convenors PHC SIG*

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## PHC SIG Committee & Membership

We are so pleased to have **Gwyn Jolley** (SA), **Christopher Carter** (WA) and **Helen Keleher** (VIC) on the committee. They provide great depth of expertise in PHC from policy, governance, and academic perspectives.

Membership of the PHC SIG currently stands at approximately 367 across Australia and overseas

ACT = 18

New South Wales = 92

Northern Territory = 18

Queensland = 46

South Australia = 53

Tasmania = 3

Victoria = 104

Western Australia = 28

Overseas = 5



*Negotiating the rocky path of policy reform*

“The roundtable discussion had a strong emphasis on the need to utilise evidence-based measures and indicators underpinned by the framework of the social determinants of health and based on principles of social justice, equity and equality.”

## Advocacy—Sustainable Population Policy

In March 2011, PHAA in collaboration with the Environmental Health, Health Promotion and PHC SIGs, submitted a response to the Australian Government’s Sustainable Population Strategy for Australia Issues Paper and was invited to a roundtable discussion with the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and

Communities, the Hon Tony Burke. Jo Walker represented PHAA at this discussion.

The attendees comprised of a range of non-government, charity and policy organisations.

The roundtable discussion had a strong emphasis on the need to utilise evidence-based measures and indicators underpinned by the framework

of the social determinants of health and based on principles of social justice, equity and equality.

The new Sustainable Population policy is due March/April 2012.

To read the submission, go to <http://www.phaa.net.au/submissions.php>

For further information, contact Jo Walker



### PHAA 41st Annual Conference

Sustainable Population Health  
26 - 28 September 2011, Brisbane Convention Centre, Brisbane

The PHAA 41st Annual Conference is due to held in Brisbane on 26th – 28th September.

Our **thanks** to PHC SIG members who volunteered to review abstracts for the conference. The speakers and presenters will cover a broad range of public health topics

that relate to sustainable population health. For further information, please see the conference website:

<http://www.phaa.net.au/41stPHAAAnnualConference.php>

The PHC SIG will be holding its **AGM** during the conference, so we welcome

our members to this meeting as we report on our activities for the year and plans for the coming year. If you have any queries about being more involved in PHAA or a SIG, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Details of the AGM will be sent out in August.

## PHC SIG Workshop at the Conference

The PHC SIG will be holding a workshop at the Conference

### **The “Medi” - The “Care” and The “Local”**

on Tuesday 27 September at 8.30am – 10.30am.

This workshop aims to

explore the opportunities and risks that the PHC reform agenda brings:

Will Medicare Locals have the capacity to address the determinants of health as well as communicable diseases and

chronic illness? How will they build healthy communities? How can PHAA support effective implementation of Medicare Locals?

This is **free** for conference registrants or \$15 if not.

# What's happening with Primary Health Care Reform?

One of the key reforms from the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission was the development of Australia's first National Primary Health Care Strategy in 2010. From 1 July 2011 the Federal government has assumed full funding and policy responsibility for GP and PHC services.

A key component of this strategy is the formation of a national network of Primary Health Care Organisations,

known as Medicare Locals. These are to be independent legal entities that aim to provide clinical leadership and strengthen links between local communities, health professionals and health service providers to facilitate better service coordination and improve equitable access to health care – particularly between primary care, hospitals, aged care and social sector. These organisations are replacing the network of Divisions of General Practice.

The first 15 Medicare Locals were announced on 6/6/2011: 4 in NSW, 4 in QLD, 2 in SA, 2 in WA, 1 in Tasmania and 1 in ACT. A further 4 were announced in Victoria a week later. To date, none have been announced for the NT. The plan is to establish 62 in total by July 2012.

On 19/7/2011 the Government invited the Australian General Practice Network to establish a national body to support and coordinate the network of Medicare Locals.

## Recent publications of interest

- Keleher H (2011) *Planning for population health in Australia's health reforms*. ANZJPH, 35 (2): 106-107
- Starfield B (2011) *The hidden inequity in health care*. International Journal for Equity in Health, 10: 15
- Harris M et al (2011) *Multidisciplinary Team Care Arrangements in the management of patients with chronic disease in Australian general practice*. MJA, 194 (5) :236– 239
- Jowsey T et al (2011) *National Health and Hospital Reform Commission final report and patient-centred suggestions for reform*. Australian Journal of Primary Health, 17: 162-168
- Tham R et al (2011) *Study protocol: Evaluating the impact of a rural Australian primary health care service on rural health*. BMC Health Services Research, 11: 52

The PHC SIG is on Twitter



@phcsig

## Vale Barbara Starfield

Barbara Starfield, professor of health policy and management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, passed away suddenly on June 10, 2011 at the age of 78.

Barbara Starfield was an accomplished and respected researcher who championed

the need for strong primary health care systems in the United States and worldwide. Her work led to the development of important methodological tools for assessing diagnosed morbidity burden, including the Adjusted Clinical Groups System, the Primary Care Assessment Tools and the

CHIP tools for assessing adolescent and child health status.

Barbara was an inspiration and mentor to many PHC researchers.



Barbara Starfield – Photo: Bloomberg School of Public Health – <http://gazette.jhu.edu>

Primary Health Care Special  
Interest Group of the Public Health  
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@phcsig

The PHCSIG aims to:

- Advance primary health care policy, programs and practice;
- Facilitate information exchange and support policy and program development at State/Territory and Commonwealth levels;
- Provide networking opportunities for workforce and for translating research into practice;
- Advance the establishment and funding of publicly funded community health and primary health care services;
- Strengthen community and government understanding of the role of comprehensive PHC in strengthening the capacity and sustainability of PHC.



## The South Australia Community Health Association (SACHA) Primary Health Care Practitioner Award

The SA Branches of PHAA and AHPA award the PHC Practitioner Award annually.

The purpose of this award is to recognise outstanding contributions to PHC practice in SA. It is named in recognition of the achievement of SACHA whose legacy funds this award.

SACHA was an independent community health lobby group whose purpose was to promote the development and maintenance of publicly funded services in SA. Although it no longer exists as an entity it maintains contributions to community health via this award.

An individual or group of people who have made a significant contribution

to PHC practice, teaching or research in SA over a number of years are invited to apply.

Any financial member of PHAA or AHPA may nominate a potential recipient, provided they are familiar with the contribution made by that person or group.

The following people have been recipients:

2006 – Michelle Kuerschner  
2007 – Kate Saint  
2008 – Anne Johnson  
2009 – Bronwyn Venning  
2010 – Deb Crawford

Each application is assessed against the following criteria using a scoring system:

- Demonstrates ongoing commitment to the principles of PHC;
- Demonstrates excellence in PHC practice;
- Contributes to promotion of PHC at broader organisational levels;
- Is available as a resource person and/or mentor
- Advocates on behalf of PHC

This award gives recognition to PHC practice and is an important contribution to raising the profile of PHC in SA.

For further information, please contact Gwyn Jolley (Email: gwyn.jolley@flinders.edu.au )