

# Sydney Health Partners Newsletter

January 2017

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## A message from the Interim Executive Director



I would like to wish all of my colleagues a very happy and prosperous New Year. There is much for our Partnership to achieve this year but before we look to the year ahead, let me first reflect on the busy and productive last few months of 2016.

As Interim Executive Director a key focus in recent months has been to strengthen Sydney Health Partners' relationships with our fellow Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres (AHRTCs) in Australia. Importantly, the four AHRTCs have agreed to create a national alliance, with a vision to improve health outcomes and tackle systems level challenges nationally through integration of research, education and health care. Together, the existing four AHRTCs that make up the Alliance reach half the Australian population and receive almost 70% of the nation's competitively funded health and medical research.

The Alliance has also proved vital in discussions with the Commonwealth Department of Health around how the AHRTCS can support the Medical Research Futures Fund (MRFF) to deliver against its Strategic Plan. The AHRTCs have been recognised as a vehicle for collaborative research and funding by the MRFF, and together we have been working with the Department to align our priorities and develop concepts and ideas for the potential future funding of research and translation to individual AHRTCs through the Alliance. Sydney Health Partners is in the fortunate position of having several competitively assessed projects that can be quickly scaled up or be accelerated to deliver tangible patient and public benefit in response to any opportunities that may arise through potential MRFF funding. I will continue to keep you updated as discussions progress.

Another of our key priorities over the last few months has been to strengthen Sydney Health Partners' communications activities, and in October we welcomed our new Media and Communications Officer, Anna Bradley. One of her first tasks was to lead the development of a Sydney Health Partners website, which I am very pleased to announce is now live – [www.sydneyhealthpartners.org.au](http://www.sydneyhealthpartners.org.au).

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The website is an important first step in telling the story of Sydney Health Partners to the wider community, and demonstrating how our Partnership is bringing together world leading researchers and clinicians to transform the way research improves the health of our patients and communities. Our task now is to promote the website to as wide an audience as possible – so may I ask that you share the site as widely as you can with your networks and colleagues.

As part of our communications activities we have also developed a Sydney Health Partners On a Page flyer <http://www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/sydneyhealthpartners/pdf/Sydney%20Health%20Partners%20on%20a%20Page.pdf> and About Sydney Health Partners brochure <http://www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/sydneyhealthpartners/pdf/About%20Sydney%20Health%20Partners%20Brochure.pdf>. Hard copies of these brochures are being sent to members of our Partnership as well as key Government and other industry stakeholders.

In December, we also held our first community engagement forum at Royal North Shore Hospital to discuss how to better involve patients and community members in health research, and to ensure that research addresses issues of priority to them. Attendees at this first forum engaged in a lively discussion of the issues; you can read more on this later in the newsletter. Over the coming months we will be hosting similar meetings across our Local Health Districts.

And last but not least we held a Sydney Health Partners workshop in October, attended by 120 participants. Hosted by the Children's Medical Research Institute, with the support of the Westmead Institute for Medical Research, the workshop provided an opportunity for our thematic streams to showcase developments; motivate and explore opportunities for collaborations; and provide feedback to the Executive Support team about priorities going forward. Further details on the workshop are also later in the newsletter.

Finally, I would like to warmly welcome Professor Garry Jennings AO as Sydney Health Partners' new Executive Director <<http://www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/sydneyhealthpartners/pdf/SHPExecutiveDirector.pdf>>. Professor Jennings has had a long and distinguished career as a researcher, clinician and executive leader, and extensive experience in health and medical research, specialising in cardiology. He served as the Director of the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute in Melbourne for 14 years and most recently as the Interim CEO of the National Heart Foundation. I have no doubt that Professor Jennings will make an enormous contribution to the Partnership, and I look forward to assisting his transition to the role over the coming months.

*Again, I wish you all a very happy and productive New Year.*



With best wishes,  
Professor Don Nutbeam  
Interim Executive Director  
Sydney Health Partners

## Better Research, Better Health Workshop, 19 October 2016



Building on the success of the inaugural Sydney Health Partners forum held earlier in March 2016, a workshop was held in October to provide a forum for strengthening collaboration across the Partnership and showcase the developments of our thematic streams so far.

Presentations by Executive Director Prof Don Nutbeam and Chair Paul McClintock AO were a feature of the day, and Dr Antonio Penna, Director of the NSW Office of Health and Medical Research, and Prof Bruce Robinson, Chair of the NHMRC, also provided perspectives on the context in which Sydney Health Partners exists at both a state and national level. Each of the 13 thematic stream leaders provided updates on their progress and workshop participants also provided extensive feedback that will inform the operations and strategy of Sydney Health Partners in both the short and medium term.

The winners of Sydney Health Partners' Enabler Funds were also announced at the workshop, recognising and supporting the development of translational research projects. The aim of the funds is to support and accelerate the delivery of tangible health research outcomes within a 12 month period.

Well-earned congratulations again go to the three fund winners:

- Accelerator Funds \$90,000 – Musculoskeletal Thematic Stream –for the acute lower back pain project – Submitted by Chris Maher and partners. This project aims to improve the management of acute low back pain in emergency departments by implementing and testing an evidence-based model of care in 4 participating hospitals – Royal Prince Alfred, Westmead, Concord and Canterbury.
- Launch Pad Funds \$40,000 – Education Thematic Stream – for the Turning Point project – Submitted by Tim Shaw and partners. This study uses electronic medical records data to provide personalised clinician education, linked directly to recent clinical encounters. The program will initially focus on two high-profile areas of practice: the management of the deteriorating patient, and infectious disease management.
- Launch Pad Funds \$40,000 – Clinical Trials Thematic Stream – for the ClinTrial Refer project – Submitted by Judith Trotman and partners. This project aims to develop a smart phone app that links clinicians, patients and researchers across SHP clinical trials.

We encouraged feedback from participants at the Workshop, and a summary of this feedback can be found in our Q&A document <http://www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/sydneyhealthpartners/pdf/WorkshopQA.pdf>



# NHMRC Symposium on Translational Research



In November Sydney Health Partners had a strong presence at the 5th Annual NHMRC Symposium on Translational Research in Melbourne, attended by over 400 participants. The theme of the Symposium was “Embedding research into health care: building a culture of quality”, and our Chair Paul McClintock AO presented on Sydney Health Partners’ strategy for success as one of the first four Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres in Australia.

Governing Council Member and Chief Executive of the Sydney Local Health District Dr Teresa Anderson also presented on how Sydney Health Partners is delivering on embedding research into health care and building a culture of quality.



Teresa’s presentation can be viewed here.

<https://webcast.gigtv.com.au/Mediasite/Play/3e9b2f227634427e86dff81f988a2671d?catalog=00217184-afb9-4851-849d-d02ebf4dbdf3>

## Community engagement forums



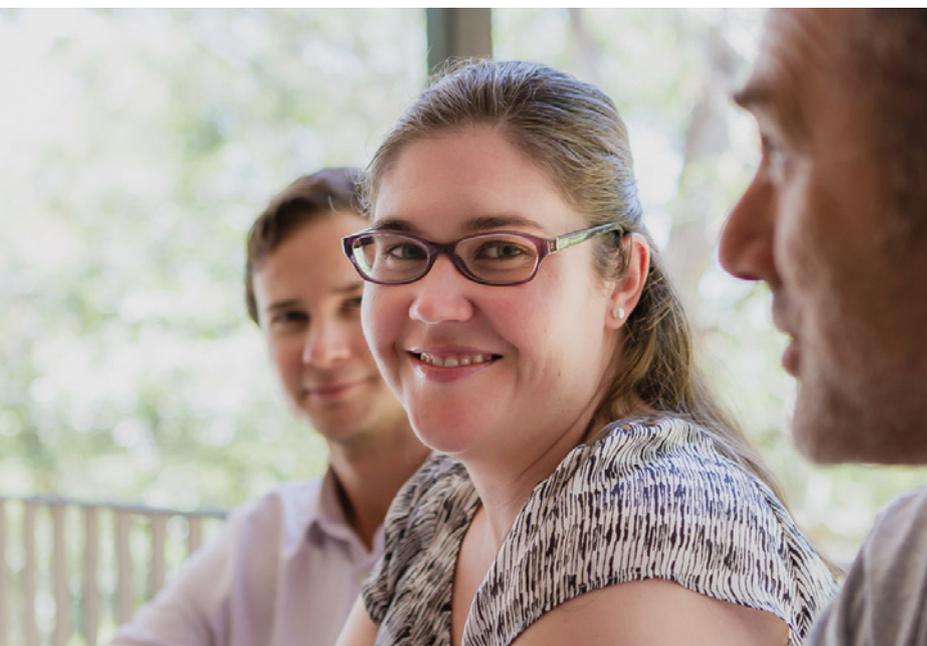
In December Sydney Health Partners hosted the first of a series of community engagement forums. Held at Royal North Shore Hospital and attended by 10 members of the community, the aim of the forum was to address two key questions – how the community would like to be involved in the development of research that addresses priority issues for them, and what types of communication they find helpful to make them aware of opportunities to participate in research.

A key focus for Sydney Health Partners is to align our research priorities with what is important to our patients and community, and to ensure that medical research is being driven by what patients, and our Local Health Districts, identify as priorities. It is vital that patients have a strong voice and that we listen and respond to what patients tell us are matters of priority when designing research questions.

This initial forum was a great success with many suggestions that can help to inform the work of Sydney Health Partners going forward.

The selected comments below provide a flavour of some of the issues raised by participants from the forum:

- “There is already plenty of research and there should be less focus on new research, and more focus on using what we know to make things better”
- “Communication needs to be clear about why this is relevant to me, and what the benefits of the research are”
- “We need research not just on improving the lives of sick people, but helping people stay healthy across the lifespan”



Further forums are planned in the next 2-3 months to gain feedback from community members within the Sydney and Western Sydney Local Health Districts. The findings from the forums will be shared once all have been completed.

## Member news



There have been a number of stories in the media from our Partners over the last few months, including:

### **The George Institute takes out Google Impact Challenge Award for TEXTCARE program**

In October The George Institute for Global Health was awarded \$750,000 for its TEXTCARE program, as a winner of Google's Impact Challenge. Led by Professor Clara Chow, the TEXTCARE program will send SMS reminders to people with chronic illnesses to remind them to take their medications and make lifestyle changes such as increasing exercise, eating healthy food and giving up smoking. Research by The George Institute found that SMS reminders doubled the odds of patients with chronic illnesses taking their medications correctly, and that people were 1.4 times as likely to exercise, 44 per cent more likely to control their blood pressure and 33 per cent more likely to quit smoking with the reminders.

The funds will enable the TEXTCARE program to reach 100,000 Australians with cardiovascular disease over the next year, with the program then rolled out to other countries and expanded to cover other chronic illnesses.

Congratulations to Professor Clara Chow, as well as Professor Wha Cheung and Drs Thiagalingam and Vincent Lee from Westmead Hospital, and the rest of the team from The George Institute for Global Health who were involved with the project.



More information on TEXTCARE can be found here

<http://www.georgeinstitute.org.au/media-releases/the-george-institute-wins-the-judges-vote-in-google-impact-challenge>

## Cardiometabolic Rapid Access Clinics on Channel 9 News



In December Professor Clara Chow also spoke with Channel 9 News about the new Rapid Access Clinics being trialled at Westmead Hospital. A collaborative project by the Northern Sydney, Sydney and Western Sydney Local Health Districts, the University of Sydney and the ANZAC Institute, the Rapid Access Clinics are being trialled as a new way of managing patients who show early signs of heart attacks.

The aims of the project are to improve access to, and quality of, outpatient services, to better target treatment to those patients who need it most, and to decrease unnecessary emergency presentations, investigative procedures and unplanned admissions.



The story can be viewed [here](#)

## The Asbestos Diseases Research Institute on Channel 9's A Current Affair



In December Dr Nico van Zandwijk, Director of the Asbestos Diseases Research Institute, spoke to Channel 9's A Current Affair about one of the most significant breakthroughs in asbestos related cancer treatment in a decade. The story featured patient stories of those who have benefited from the research.



The story can also be viewed in the News and Highlights [www.sydneyhealthpartners.org.au](http://www.sydneyhealthpartners.org.au) section of our website.