

Spring

2016

Hamilton Base Hospital
Grange Residential Care Service
The Birches Residential Care
Frances Hewett Community Centre
National Centre for Farmer Health
Coleraine District Health Service
Merino Community Health Centre
Penshurst District Health Service



Talking Health

Community 4 Youth Board

A new Community 4 Youth Board (C4YB) is supporting youth activities and driving projects to improve the lives of young people in the region.

The C4YB comprises community members who are passionate about youth issues.

Established as an Advisory Committee of the WDHS Board, the C4YB is assisting the Health Service to better understand and meet the needs of young people.

The C4YB is co-chaired by Emma Nicholas, an enthusiastic youth advocate and Hugh Macdonald, the current WDHS Board President.

Hugh says the C4YB represents the voice of young people aged between 16 and 25, who live, work, study or socialise in the Southern Grampians Shire.

“Through the C4YB, local business leaders have opportunities to support youth and young people have an avenue for direct

input into decision making that affects them and their peers.

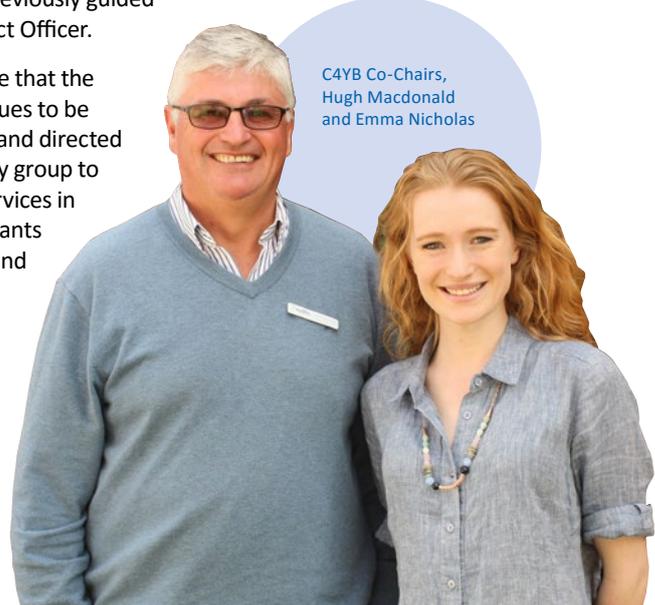
The C4YB also provides support and direction to the Hamilton Freeza Committee, which was previously guided by a full time Youth Project Officer.

The new Board will ensure that the Freeza Committee continues to be appropriately supported and directed and will also act as a lobby group to develop further youth services in the region and identify grants for specific youth needs and programs,” Hugh said.

C4YB Youth Chair, Emma Nicholas says the C4YB is also a chance for young people to get some fantastic experience.

“This is an exciting initiative because it is another way we can

get our community thinking about its young people and also supports youth to be leaders and decision-makers in their communities,” Emma said.



C4YB Co-Chairs,
Hugh Macdonald
and Emma Nicholas

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Top image: WDHS Life Governor, Pat O’Beirne with AGM Guest Speaker, Wendy Henderson at the 2016 WDHS Annual General Meeting



From the CE

Welcome to the Spring edition of Talking Health. Since our last newsletter, WDHS has continued to actively promote and support advocacy on a range of public health issues.

I am delighted by the establishment of our Youth Board, to provide advice to the Board of Directors on issues relevant to young people in our region. This vibrant and energetic group is already making a difference and was responsible for the inclusion of a 'health pop up shop' at the recent Spring Break Festival.

WDHS is also continuing to promote a reduction in sugar intake in our community and recently piloted the Shake off Sugar program at St Mary's Primary School. We are also undertaking a research project in collaboration with Deakin University to monitor and evaluate the impact of removing sugary drinks from the 13 health services in the region.

Our fundraising efforts are continuing for the cancer treatment redevelopment at Hamilton Base Hospital. Thanks to the

generosity of our community, we have raised an incredible \$400,000 to date. The plans are currently being finalised by Warrnambool based Chris Steel Designs, and will also include a new dialysis area.

Our goal of providing cancer services closer to home were boosted with the addition of a new outreach Radiation Oncologist Service to Hamilton from Warrnambool.

A program targeting stroke patients introduced at WDHS in August is also delivering better outcomes for stroke sufferers. The Victorian Stroke Telemedicine Program is a partnership with organisations including the Royal Melbourne Hospital and is enabling clinicians to collaborate across organisational boundaries.

Antibiotic Awareness Week is an excellent opportunity each year to highlight antibiotic resistance as a public health problem. The Health Service will be addressing this issue with the introduction of a new system to improve antibiotic prescribing in 2017.

There have been a flurry of events over recent months, with the running of our first ever Garden Open Day, Vitality Fun Run, Run for Farmer Health (as a part of the Melbourne Marathon Festival), Arctic Blast and the ever popular Golf Day.

Together, the Southern Grampians Shire and WDHS also promoted awareness of violence against women at our inaugural White Ribbon Day lunch. The message for all is to stand up, speak out and act to prevent violence against women in our community.

We have many wonderful employees and Anne-Marie Wheaton's reflection on her remote nursing experience provides an insight into the dedication and selflessness of our staff to the provision of care for all.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Talking Health and would like to wish you all a very merry and safe Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Rohan Fitzgerald
Chief Executive

New website helping kids 'shake off sugar'

A new website being piloted at St Mary's Primary School is helping kids 'shake off sugar' and make healthier lifestyle choices.

WDHS developed the website as part of its work with GenR8 Change, a social movement empowering and strengthening the Southern Grampians community to 'make the healthy choice the easy choice'.

WDHS Chief Executive, Rohan Fitzgerald says St Mary's are the pilot school, but he hopes to take the program out to many more schools across Western Victoria and eventually nationally.

"Western District Health Service took the step of removing sugary drinks from sale at its campuses in November last year.

Since then, we have been looking at ways to assist our community to make the switch. We have been working on creating a replicable and flexible system for schools and community groups to provide access to information and create their own healthy options movement.

Over the last few months we have built a website that allows children to monitor

their sugary drink intake and develop strategies to reduce the number of sugary drinks they consume.

Each child is given an opportunity to set a goal with their teacher or parent and enter their details into a website portal administered by St Mary's. The process is relatively straightforward and once set up only takes a minimum amount of work to maintain. Participating students receive an email letting them know how they are tracking against their goals each week.

There is also an online dashboard for the school to access which shows the total reduction in sugar intake by students," Rohan said.

The Grade 5/6 students at St Mary's have piloted the program through term 4 and are thrilled to be a part of the program, according to teacher, Jamie Ferguson.

"Many of the students are shocked by just how much sugar is contained in some of their favourite drinks, particularly sports drinks like Gatorade and Powerade.

They are excited about the opportunity to track their sugar intake, water intake and physical activity, all while setting challenging goals for themselves to improve in one of these areas.

The positive lifelong benefits of this program are endless and being able to enlighten the students as to how they can improve their health and lifestyle in more ways than one is really exciting.

It has the potential to change their lives and invigorate their intrinsic motivation, which can leave them with an extraordinary foundation to live long and happy lives," Jamie said.



St Mary's children eager to try out the new Shake Off Sugar program with Community Liaison Officer, Leonie Sharrock

Remote nursing experience

One of the many advantages of a career in nursing is the range of specialisations and unique opportunities and experiences the profession can deliver.

For Registered Nurse, Anne-Marie Wheaton, who has worked as a RN for over 27 years, her interest in remote area nursing and Indigenous health has taken her on a journey of discovery over the last 12 months.

“Initially I spent ten weeks at Dirranbandi in Western Queensland, not far from Lightning Ridge, at a multipurpose centre with eight to ten hospital beds, aged care and accident and emergency facilities.

I then trained for three weeks in Alice Springs, before heading out to Haasts Bluff (also known as Ikuntji), an Indigenous community located in the MacDonnell Ranges, 227 kilometres west of Alice,” Anne-Marie said.

The experience at Haasts Bluff (although short), was particularly enlightening for Anne-Marie in terms of developing cultural awareness, resilience and an understanding of how challenging life can be for people living and working in remote locations.

“When you work remotely as an RN you are essentially the sole practitioner; you are not only nurse, but paramedic as well.

The conditions are extraordinary, you don't always have all weather roads and airstrips and the doctor visits only once a month, so you really do take on the responsibility for that community's care.

It is an incredible cultural experience too. On the drive out, you get a run through of some of the cultural aspects specific to the community you will be working in.

English is often the second or third language, so an Indigenous health worker needs to interpret for you,” Anne-Marie said.

The Haasts Bluff area is beautiful and the community has some talented artists, who make a living by selling works at their local arts centre and in Alice Springs.

However, Anne-Marie says there is also real hardship, significant health issues and the cost of food is astronomical.

“I noticed that in Alice Springs you can get kangaroo tail for around \$12 and in the community it is double that.

Improved immunisation rates have impacted positively and a number of other programs are also delivering good results, but overall the health of the population is comparatively poor.

One thing I learned is that people can often be a lot sicker than they might

initially appear. Because you are so far from a hospital and a doctor, you really need to act quickly and decisively, because you can't take the risk of people deteriorating when you are so far from critical care,” Anne-Marie said.

Working back home in the HBH Emergency Department, Anne Marie believes the experience has made her so much more aware of 'cultural safety'.

“I don't think we fully appreciate how groups of people in our community might struggle to come into a mainstream setting.

Nurses need to be really reflective of their attitude, so that when they approach someone, they do so from a position of equal power.

I also think as healthcare providers we need to continually question ourselves and our service to ensure that it meets people's needs.

For example, if a sick grandma, responsible for looking after a number of children, fails to make an appointment at 9am, understanding culturally that there could be a lot more going on, is really important.

Both remote nursing experiences have taught me so much that will change my outlook and practice into the future,” Anne-Marie said.



The MacDonnell Ranges provide a magnificent backdrop to the Haasts Bluff Football Oval

Victorian Stroke Telemedicine Program delivering better outcomes for stroke patients

Time is everything when it comes to treating stroke and a program being piloted by the Florey Institute, Royal Melbourne Hospital and funded by state and federal governments is improving outcomes for stroke sufferers in rural areas across the state.

The Victorian Stroke Telemedicine (VST) Program went live at WDHS on August 11 and has already proved lifesaving.

The program targets acute stroke patients who present to ED within 4.5 hours of symptom onset, when rapid treatment with a clot busting drug can mean the difference between life and death and lifelong disability.

The drug must be given within 4.5 hours of the stroke occurring, but it has its risks and can't be given without expert opinion.

Technology delivered through the VST Program allows neurologists in Melbourne to see CT images of the brain remotely and conduct live consults at the patient's bedside to assess suitability for thrombolysis – the administration of a clot busting drug.

Through CT imaging, the neurologist can also view clots in the large vessels of the brain and can recommend emergency transfer to the Royal Melbourne Hospital for a specialised clot retrieval procedure.

WDHS VST Site Coordinator, Julie Stevens says the project has already delivered excellent outcomes for patients.

“Recently we had a young patient present with stroke symptoms and using the VST technology she was assessed by the neurologist and transported to Melbourne for clot retrieval within 2 hours.

Everything went so well that the patient was admitted on a Thursday and allowed home the following Sunday, a fantastic result,” Julie said.

To support the program, a state of the art Teledoc machine has been funded in ED and Bendigo Radiology has also installed new technology to send images remotely, so that specialists can see them in real time.

Julie says through the VST program, WDHS has also re-evaluated its stroke frameworks, assessing where along the ‘patient journey’ it can improve efficiencies.

“We have looked at how we can get the patient from the doors of our Emergency Department (ED) to brain imaging in a more timely manner, so the neurologist or treating physician has faster access to the CT images.

Historic Garden Open Day

Garden and history enthusiasts seized a unique opportunity to wander the pathways of several spectacular local gardens at the inaugural WDHS Historic Garden Open Day in October.

Bassett, Murndal and Ardgartan were visited by over 800 people, who braved the unpredictable Spring weather to get a glimpse of three of the region's most

impressive gardens and homes, rarely open to the public.

Chief Executive, Rohan Fitzgerald said the event was a huge success, raising over \$23,000 for the new cancer treatment area at Hamilton Base Hospital.

“It was wonderful to see the number of people who turned out to support this event.

We would like to thank the community, our volunteers and the Winter-Cooke, Whiting and Youngman families.

These generous families not only provided access to their beautiful gardens but also volunteered and put in an enormous amount of work to ensure that each garden presented perfectly on the day,” Rohan said.



Photos supplied by Hamilton Spectator

Visitors enjoying the beautiful gardens at Bassett (left) and the Edna Walling designed Ardgartan (right)

We have also introduced a 'stroke call' at WDHS to deliver a stroke team response where key personnel across a number of disciplines are called to help a patient travel through the care pathway more quickly," Julie said.

Florey Institute research indicates that the VST program has patients across the state receiving the clot-busting drug on average 40 minutes earlier.

Julie says given how important time is to positive patient outcomes, greater community awareness of stroke symptoms is incredibly important.

"The FAST - face, arms, speech, time - is really key, especially given the demographics of our population, where we have people who live good distances from hospital.

It is all time dependent, the earlier you act the better the outcome," Julie said.

How can you assess if someone is having a stroke? Think...F.A.S.T.

Face - check their FACE - has their mouth drooped?

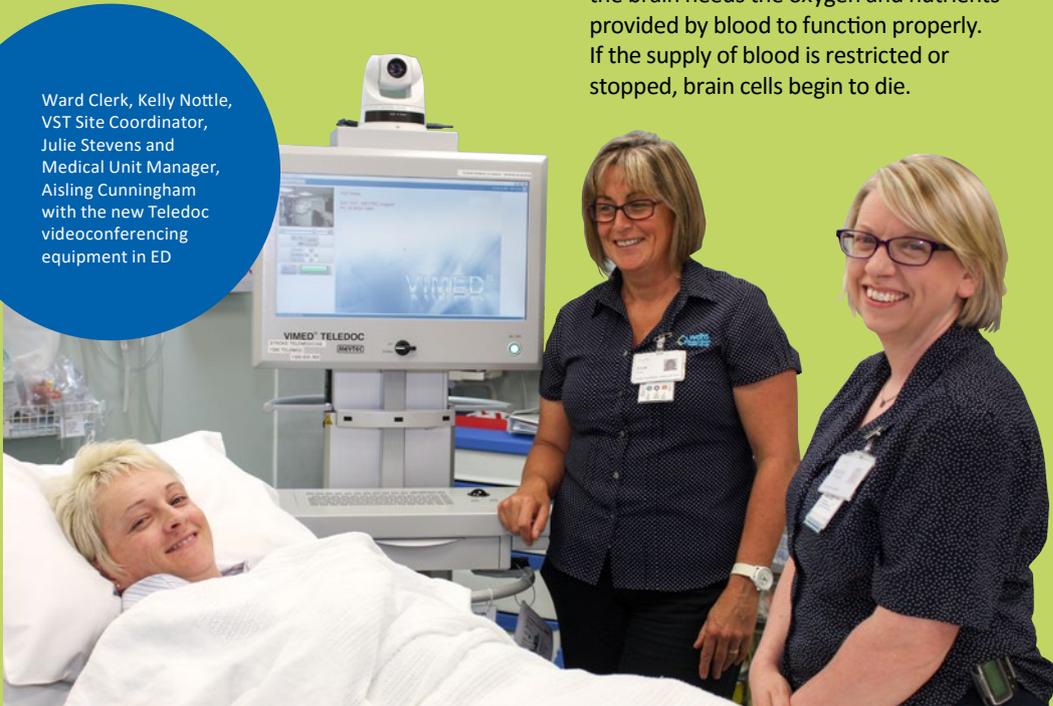
Arms - can they lift both ARMS?

Speech - is their SPEECH slurred and do they understand you?

Time - TIME is critical - if you see any of these signs, call 000 now!

For more information visit: strokefoundation.org.au

Ward Clerk, Kelly Nottle, VST Site Coordinator, Julie Stevens and Medical Unit Manager, Aisling Cunningham with the new Teledoc videoconferencing equipment in ED



Community partnership delivers new community car

Taylor Motors and the Hospital Opportunity Shop have partnered with WDHS to support the highly successful Community Transport service.

The WDHS Community Transport Program delivers clients without other means of transport to specialist appointments in Warrnambool, Ballarat, Geelong, Mt Gambier and Melbourne.

The service relies on an incredible team of over 60 volunteer drivers, who travel over 200,000 kms each year, taking people to medical appointments.

The demand for the program continues to grow, with 1,638 trips provided in 2015 compared to 1,823 in 2016.

Greater demand and a lack of funding meant that the Health Service was funding a shortfall from its operational budget, but a new arrangement with Taylors and the Op Shop, has changed all that.

WDHS Chief Executive, Rohan Fitzgerald says he is excited to be partnering with these organisations to offset the additional cost of the program, which amounts to approximately \$38,000 per year.

"The largest expenses are motor vehicle running costs such as fuel, servicing and car changeover costs.

Through an advertised expression of interest process, Taylor Motors were selected to support the service.

Their contribution reduces changeover and servicing costs and supports the overall sustainability of the program.

A substantial annual contribution of \$25,000 from the Hospital Opportunity Shop will also assist in making the service more viable into the future.

We are very grateful for the support of Taylors, Toyota and the Op Shop, which will allow us to continue to deliver this essential service for people in the region," Rohan said.



WDHS Op Shop Volunteers and staff get their first look at the new community car at Taylor Motors

Photo supplied by Hamilton Spectator



New specialist radiation oncologist

WDHS is pleased to welcome Radiation Oncologist, Dr Tracie Gleisner, who is now visiting Hamilton each month to provide specialist radiation oncology clinics.

Dr Gleisner trained at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, where she worked for ten years as a consultant, the final three of those as Site Director.

She is currently the Director of Radiation Services at the Epworth in Warrnambool.

Dr Gleisner says she grew up in the Otways and attended secondary school in Colac, so is thrilled to return to the southwest and be contributing to cancer services locally.



New Visiting Radiation Oncologist, Dr Tracie Gleisner

SGSC CEO, Michael Tudball and WDHS CEO Rohan Fitzgerald working together to raise awareness to prevent men's violence against women

White Ribbon Day

WDHS and the Southern Grampians Shire joined forces in November to highlight the issue of family violence and its impact on our community.

Over 120 people attended a White Ribbon Lunch, featuring guest speakers Michael Costigan from the Tara Costigan Foundation and Police Inspector, Nick Finnegan.

Michael spoke of his personal heartbreak following the death of his niece, Tara Costigan at the hands of her partner in 2015 and of the need for men to be 'warriors' on this issue.

"I don't mean warriors in the traditional sense – rather 'warriors' in a protective sense, who will 'stand up, speak out and act' to prevent men's violence against women," Michael said.

Police Inspector, Nick Finnegan discussed the increasing number of locally reported incidents, citing a significant rise over recent years. He said disturbingly, many of these incidents occurred with children present.

Inspector Finnegan also reiterated the message that we need to stand up and

speak out when we know violence is occurring.

"Mr Citizen is very good at reporting drug related crime, but is less likely to report domestic violence and this is something that needs to change," Inspector Finnegan said.

WDHS Chief Executive, Rohan Fitzgerald says it was encouraging to see so many people attend the lunch, in support of the White Ribbon movement.

"I think there is a sense that violence against women is something that happens somewhere else, but it is a real issue in our community, just as it is all over Australia.

The statistics are shocking and we need to come together to look at ways we might be able to turn this around.

To end men's violence against women, we need to change attitudes and behaviours and there are many practical steps we can take every day to make our communities safer for all women," Rohan said.

WDHS will be hosting a community forum on the issue early in the New Year.

Antibiotic Awareness Week

Antibiotic Awareness Week in Australia is part of a global push endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to encourage people to handle antibiotics with care to slow the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

WDHS Pharmacists kicked off the week in November with an afternoon tea to

raise awareness about antimicrobial resistance and conducted a range of activities and displays to educate staff about the importance of appropriate antibiotic use.



Charlie Watt Volunteer of the Month



May – Rayleen Holliday Grange



June – Katie Benson Penshurst



July – Anne Milne Comforts Trolley



August – Julia Hearn Meal Buddy - Birches



Coles Store Manager Michelle Olesen, WDHS CE Rohan Fitzgerald, SGSC CEO Michael Tudball, Hamilton Spectator Publisher, Richard Beks and Woolworths Store Manager Wayne Millard with one of the new AEDs

Photo supplied by Hamilton Spectator

Hamilton Heart Start delivers lifesaving defibs

In July WDHS worked with local businesses and the Southern Grampians Shire to fund public access defibrillators in the Hamilton CBD. The defibrillators were installed at Coles, Woolworths and the Hamilton Spectator.

The Automatic External Defibrillators (AED's) provide easy to understand, voiced instructions for users, making it possible for more people to respond to a medical emergency where defibrillation is required.

Around 30,000 Australians suffer a sudden cardiac arrest each year, of which

only 5% survive. Research suggests that the use of a defibrillator in the first few minutes can improve survival rates by up to 70 per cent.

WDHS Chief Executive, Rohan Fitzgerald believes that as a public health service, WDHS has a responsibility to promote and support healthcare beyond its boundary, so that people in the community live longer, healthier lives.

“AEDs are now recognised as part of basic first aid and if these devices save just one life in Hamilton, it will be a well-placed investment,” Rohan said.

Staff learning gets a reboot

With over 730 WDHS employees working in a variety of medical, administrative and support roles, the task of ensuring training and competencies are up to date requires continual monitoring.

To support the process, this year the South West Alliance of Rural Health (SWARH) jointly moved to a new Learning Management System (LMS), Solle 16.

Learning management systems allow staff to do courses electronically when convenient, providing shift workers with greater flexibility in receiving new information, maintaining knowledge and advancing skills.

WDHS currently provides over 70 different educational courses on Solle. Topics include occupational health and safety and fire training for all employees and more specialised education, such as food safety for Hotel Services staff, blood

transfusion management for medical staff and elder abuse training for those working in aged care.

Learning and Development Manager, Dorothy McLaren says the LMS upgrade has been labour intensive, but the new system has a number of benefits.

“In order to comply with all accreditation standards, the new LMS was introduced at 15 health services across the South West.

Solle 16 has a more engaging interface for users and will deliver improved learning experiences.

The new reporting functions will also not only save time, but guarantee the timely checking of

staff compliance, to ensure that staff training is maintained to accreditation standards,” Dorothy said.

Website Administrator, Bianca Todd, with Learning and Development staff members Chris McGennissen and Sally Kinghorn





Participants set off in the 4.2km event at the 8th Hamilton Vitality Fun Run

Going the distance for people with cancer

At the 8th Annual Vitality Fun Run, several hundred runners and walkers took to the track to raise funds for the new WDHS cancer treatment area.

Despite a last minute change in course following damage sustained by flooding, the event proved popular again this year.

David Staehr from Kaniva, ran the fastest 21km ever at the event in just over 1 hour and 21 minutes. Michelle Edgar was the first female to finish in 1 hour 51 minutes.

The Walsgott family from Horsham also had a successful morning, with 13 year old Ella winning the 4.2km for the second year in a row, Sienna coming 3rd in the Under 14 race, Jackson 5th in the 10km, alongside mum Katie who was the first female to cross the finish line in the 10km.

Local lad Johnathon Rentsch, stepped up to the 10km this year, after coming third in the 4.2km in 2015 and was a fantastic second, behind Richard Wade from Warrnambool.

Rotary Sports Scholarships were awarded to three upcoming sports stars, Brooke Stone for Basketball, Chad Dymke, Victorian State Athletics and Todd Dymke, Victorian State Swimming.

The event raised over \$3,000 for the new cancer treatment area at Hamilton Base Hospital.

Employee of the Month



May
– Sheeja Santhinilayam
ANUM Birches



June
– Amber Fitzpatrick
Salary Packaging



July
– Kim Fort
Ward Clerk District Nursing



August
– David Kerr
Nurse Attendant



September
– Raylene Koenig
Administration Assistant
Maintenance



October
– Tara Jane Bailey
Enrolled Nurse, Coleraine

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Events, fundraisers and philanthropy



Theatre Unit Manager, Mark Stevenson, Surgeon UK Naidoo and WDHS Chief Executive, Rohan Fitzgerald with one of eight new scopes purchased by WDHS with the assistance of the Collier Charitable Fund



Over 100 runners participated in the Run 4 Farmer Health at the Melbourne Marathon, raising \$3,260 for the National Centre for Farmer Health



The Arctic Blast Ball raised \$23,000 for the HBH cancer redevelopment



The Hospital Opportunity Shop Golf Tournament raised \$16,500 for the new cancer treatment area



The National Centre for Farmer Health were recipients of the "Non-Clinical Excellence Award" at the 2016 WDHS AGM