



Media Release

Monday 10 May 2010

Festival of Knowledge Commences in Invercargill Today

The Southern Region is hosting a prestigious international mental health conference over the next two days.

Over 170 distinguished mental health experts from all over the world have gathered for the event entitled '*Schizophrenia – where do we go from here*', which is being held at the Ascot Park Hotel from 10-11th of May 2010.

The conference, which focuses on improving the treatment of schizophrenia, has been organised by the Indo Indo-Australasian Psychiatry Association (IAPA) and features highly regarded speakers from the USA, UK, India, Australia and New Zealand, as well as local practitioners from Southern DHB's Southland Mental Health Services.

Key note speakers include Dr Charles Hornabrook, (Ministry of Health Deputy Director, Mental Health), Professor Dinesh Bhugra, President of the United Kingdom's Royal College of Psychiatrists, Professor Louise Newmen, President of the Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, and chief guest His Excellency the High Commissioner of India, Admiral Sureesh Mehta.

Dr Digvijay Goel, Southern DHB Psychiatrist and IAPA conference convenor, said the event is a "festival of knowledge" at which international practitioners from all mental health disciplines will share their thoughts on improving the quality of life for those with schizophrenia.

"This is the first IAPA conference where psychiatrists are the minority, which is very exciting," said Dr Goel.

"We are presenting an inclusive conference for all mental health clinicians to participate in, as we believe a holistic approach is needed to improving outcomes for people with schizophrenia."

"Mental Health is not about medicating, it is about rebuilding people's lives with all of the techniques available to us.

"Therefore we have a wide range of practitioners including psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists, social workers and consumer advisers in attendance to share their knowledge and expertise."

The conference is being co-sponsored by the World Psychiatric Association, (WPA), World Association of Psychological Rehabilitation ANZ (WAPRNZ), South Asian Federation International (SAFI), Asian Federation of Psychiatric Associations (SAFI) and the Southern District Health Board.

The format involves a series of scientific sessions, focusing on removing the stigma associated with schizophrenia and discussing innovative treatments. Each

session features an interactive forum at its conclusion for participants to discuss future directions of treatment.

"There is sufficient evidence already available to improve outcomes for those with schizophrenia, said Dr Goel. "However we need to strategise how best to use the available resources to create the most effective treatment plans."

Dr Goel said conference delegates would agree on consensus guidelines at the end of the research group discussions. These guidelines will then be presented in the Asian Journal of Psychiatry as findings of the Invercargill Conference.

Open Forum for the Public and Media

On day two of the conference the public and the media are invited to attend an open forum, focussing on the themes of Recovery, Rehabilitation and Social Inclusion.

The session, to be held from 2pm-4pm on Tuesday, 11 May, features Invercargill Mayor Tim Shadbolt as chief guest. Dr Goel says the interactive session will allow consumers, carers, support groups and the general public to interact with leading experts in the field.

"This session, and the conference as a whole, aims to inform, help remove the stigma of schizophrenia and to convey a message of hope to those whose lives are touched by mental illness," Dr Goel says.

To find out more about the IAPA visit www.iapa.com.au

WAPRANZ Symposium – Theme: Recovery, Rehabilitation and Social Inclusion

Open to the public and media

Interactive session

Ascot Park Hotel, Invercargill,
New Zealand

11 May 2010 : 1400h – 1600h

Chief Guest: Mayor Tim Shadbolt

Chairpersons: Prof P Deva, Dr Russell D'Souza

Speakers:

Dr Charles Hornabrook, (Ministry of Health Deputy Director, Mental Health): *The New Zealand perspective*

Kathy Saunders & Jo Cockroft: *Silence of the lambs – rebuilding lives*

Prof Dinesh Bhugra (President, Royal College of Psychiatrists, UK): *Stigma*

Prof Mohan Isaac (UWA, Perth): *Rehabilitation - what it means*

Prof Rajiv Tandon (USA): *Pharmacotherapy*

Prof Suresh Sundaram (Melbourne): *What does the future hold for patients, families and carers*

Photo Opportunity: 4.30pm, Monday 11 May

IAPA Conference delegates will be gathering for a group photo at the Ascot Park Hotel Foyer this afternoon at 4.30pm. Key note speakers and delegates will be available for media interviews following this photo opportunity.

Media Queries

Contact Jo Harvey, Regional Communications Officer, Southern DHB, on 027 674 1758 or 03 2147243.

