

SA's New Principal AH Advisor

CAHE introduces the Dept of Health's latest addition to the team: Catherine Turnbull.

The South Australian Department of Health (DH) has taken allied health matters in hand and appointed Catherine Turnbull as its new Principal Allied Health Advisor. Catherine is representing allied health services and comes to Adelaide with a wealth of experience from her career in New South Wales' allied health arena.

After completing her Bachelor degree (Social Work) in 1991, Catherine's career spanned the paediatric social work team at Westmead Hospital, Deputy Head of Department at The Children's Hospital (Camperdown) and Head of Department at the New Childrens' Hospital (Westmead). In 2000 she was employed as Director (Social Work) with the Central Sydney Area Health Service, moving to the position of A/Deputy Director (Allied Health) for Sydney South West Area Health Service in 2006.

Her involvement in professional associations include: President, Allied Health Alliance (NSW), Chair, Professional Vocational Committee (Health Services Union) and State President, Australian Association of Social Workers (NSW).

Having just completed her Masters (Public Administration) Catherine was on the search for a role she could truly embrace. With the 'mountains' (Adelaide Hills) and the sea only 20 minutes apart and of course the glorious epicurean delights of SA, the decision to move to Adelaide seemed obvious when this role became available.

Catherine feels that defining a clear structure for AH is vital to ensure AH are part of the DH's reform agenda which includes a whole of government approach and clinical networks. DH support for AH has also been reflected in the recent appointment of a Senior AH Advisor (Country Health SA). Catherine will work with this position and others in AH, to provide advice to the CE (DH), Dr Tony Sherbon and SA's Minister for Health, the Hon John Hill MP.

Catherine stated that there are currently a number of state and national issues regarding AH including registration of certain professions, inter-professional learning (IPL), competencies and allied health assistants. It is Catherine's aim to ensure that AH have a clear voice as well as the opportunity to provide leadership on these matters. She is also committed to listening and working with AH professional associations and boards, as well as national organisations such as Allied Health Professions Australia and the National AH Advisory Committee.



One of the challenges facing AH stakeholders is to create good structures with clearly identified leadership within each health region for both allied health and each discipline within allied health. With allied health receiving greater recognition and relevance in health care Catherine aims to develop formal lines of leadership to ensure AH policies and best practice are developed and progressed. She commented:

"This new AH role provides a unique opportunity to strengthen the voice of allied health in South Australia, as well as nationally & internationally."

CAHE would like to welcome Catherine Turnbull to SA and is anticipating a productive relationship with the new Principal AH Advisor. Some issues Catherine considered hot AH topics will be the areas of education (including IPL, AH assistants, supervision and competencies), industrial matters (in areas such as award changes, recruitment and retention) and AH structures (such as career opportunities, leadership positioning, and visibility). She will be providing a monthly bulletin in the CAHE newsletter in which she will outline directives and initiatives. Catherine encourages allied health stakeholders to contact her with pertinent AH issues and topics for discussion (catherine.turnbull@health.sa.gov.au).

Pict above: Catherine Turnbull, new Principal Allied Health Advisor, South Australian Department of Health

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Visiting USA Professor brings insights

Professor Guy Nehrenz talks to CAHE about allied health education online.

Dr Guy M. Nehrenz, Ed.D., MA, RRT of, is the Associate Dean, College of Allied Health and Nursing at Nova Southeastern University (NSU), Chair, Department of Health Science (NSU) and Managing Editor of [Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice](#). This month he is visiting the Adelaide offices of CAHE, bringing his insights and thoughts on education platforms and online innovations for allied health professionals.

As CAHE exists for many as a purely virtual organisation the CAHE website is an important tool in ensuring new developments and innovations are available to its worldwide audience. CAHE is focused on providing allied health information and education is widely available and provides uniform education standards. Dr Nehrenz has been 'imported' to Australia to assist CAHE with developing and increasing the use of online education, specifically in the fields of epidemiology and evidence-based practice (EBP). The aim of this relationship is to assist CAHE with providing continuing education to allied health professionals, who often have significant time commitments and would find physically attending classes almost impossible. Online education provides an avenue for AH practitioners to access education within their own schedules.

Dr. Nehrenz has nearly 30 years experience in the USA health arena, starting his career with Samaritan Health System in Phoenix where he was a neonatal intensive care respiratory therapist. Later he was a flight therapist (medic) who worked on rotor wing and fixed wing aircraft as well as the trauma centre. In his flight career, he flew over 1600 flights during the decade with this organisation. Later, he was Administrative Director of Medical Education, as well as Director of Research for a number of multi-level research centres within Samaritan Health. His first full time university administrative role came as the assistant dean for Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Moving to NSU (Florida) in June 2002 Dr Nehrenz started the Doctor of Health Science Program and later rose to the positions of Associate Dean for Allied Health and Nursing and Chair for the Department of Health Science. Dr Nehrenz is always mindful of the need for accessible continuing education for professionals. At NSU, there are presently over 27,000 students with 12,000 of these taking all or part of their courses online.

The online programs offered by NSU are devised assessing the areas where online education is pertinent and where physical clinical training is necessary. For many USA AH professionals they possess the clinical experience and therefore don't need to incorporate attending physical classes in to their continuing education plan.

The USA and Australia AH qualifications and educational strategies vary. In the USA many allied health professional will undertake an entry-level clinical doctorate in their chosen field of practice while others enter the profession at the Bachelors and Masters. Australia offers Bachelor degrees in specific AH areas, with the opportunity for AH post-graduates to then complete their PhD should they chose to. In either system the need for continuing education and the provision of an accessible medium for AH practitioners to keep abreast of new techniques or have uniform standards for association membership are just two of the areas where online education has much to offer.

Dr Nehrenz's philosophy on online education is simple: the overall universal increase of knowledge for allied health professionals. In his online [Philosophy](#) he states:

It is well known that interactive learning is a method that touches more strings in the adult learner. Simply spewing information in the hopes that the learner will obtain knowledge is a one-way method of instruction, and should be discouraged in this arena of academic endeavour. Interactive learning is a two-way learning cycle. A learning community, online and in-person.

Dr Nehrenz can be contacted directly for further information on online education (gnehrenz@nsu.nova.edu) or you can visit his website: www.drnehrenz.com.

Pictured right: Visiting Professor Dr Guy Nehrenz, Nova Southeastern University



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