

14 September 2009



MEDIA RELEASE

HEALTH CARE GROUP WELCOMES NEW FAMILY PLANNING NURSE

A new Family Planning Nurse has joined the community health team at Wimmera Health Care Group. Sharyn Cook has commenced in the role, replacing Genevieve Lilley, who has moved away from the region.

Director of Clinical Services, Don McRae said that Sharyn brings a broad range of skills and experience to the role. "Sharyn has worked in the Wimmera for many years as a midwife, secondary school nurse and community health nurse. She is well equipped to provide this important service to Wimmera residents" he said.

Sharyn said that the aim of the program is to promote healthier outcomes through education about sexual and reproductive health. "Many people are still uncomfortable when it comes to sex education and some people believe that talking about it may lead to increased sexual activity at a younger age."

"Research tells us that young people are more likely to delay sexual activity and are better prepared for it when the time comes if they are informed of all the facts. If poor choices are made, negative outcomes can include unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. There are many responsibilities associated with sexual activity and if our young people are not properly educated, it is difficult for them to make good choices" she said.

Sharyn's advice to families is to include sexual health and wellbeing topics in normal family conversations, where adults can offer age appropriate information to allow for good decision making. "Young people learn much of their behaviour about relationships from what they see at home. If they are to make good choices concerning their future, then parents need to be open to communication" she said.

Sharyn said that sadly, sex education was lacking for many parents in their formative years and many teenagers do not feel comfortable talking to their parents about sexual health related issues. "Young people need to spend many hours driving under the education of parents before they are considered safe at the wheel, perhaps a similar number of hours should be spent educating them about sexual health, both physically and emotionally."

“There are many excellent resources available to help parents teach their children about this important topic. Good parenting is essential for healthy communities. It is the most important job of all” she said.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Family Planning Nurse service and the resources available should contact Sharyn Cook on ph. 5362 1240.



Sharyn Cook (right) discusses contraception options with Tracey Pitts

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