

## Measuring the steps to heart health

A new Health Promotion project in Warrawong received a cash injection of \$180,000 from NSW Health recently. The project will assess whether pedometers (step counting devices) help people with heart disease to increase their levels of physical activity.

"We're looking to see if the use of a pedometer encourages people who have been referred to cardiac rehabilitation to increase their amount of walking or other physical activity," Dr Susan Furber, Health Promotion Research and Evaluation Co-ordinator said.

The project will run for two years with Illawarra and Shoalhaven cardiac rehabilitation patients and - if successful - may result in real health benefits for patients as well as cost savings for the health system.

"If heart disease patients are more active there is a reduced risk of hospitalisation and repeat revascularisation procedures. Currently few patients with heart disease achieve the recommended targets for physical activity for better health. We're keen to find out how to motivate them to do so," Dr Furber said.

The project is in partnership with the National Heart Foundation, the NSW Centre for Physical Activity and Health, and the Standish Medical Centre, Nowra and is part of the NSW Health Promotion Demonstration Research Grants Scheme. ♦

## The Ripple Effect - collaborative learning for enhanced health promotion practice

A project aimed to enhance the quality of health promotion programs amongst multicultural health workers in the Illawarra was presented at the national Health Promotion conference in Canberra.

"Multicultural health workers identified the need to enhance the planning, evaluation and documentation of their health promotion programs as an issue to address," Nieves Oliver, the Health Promotion project co-ordinator said.

A peer review system was established where each multicultural health worker presented a project in its planning stage using recognised Health Promotion planning tools. The group then worked together to review the

program and suggest where improvements could be made. The group of 11 workers and the Health Promotion project co-ordinator met each month for two hours, over 16 months.

"We found organisational change and skill development was easier to achieve when the people who work within the organisation control the process," Ms Oliver said. ♦

## Community Kitchen - Changing Lives

The Warrawong Community Kitchen continues to thrive and change lives according to the Community Health Promotion workers and volunteers that oversee the project.



Celebrating good food at the Community Kitchen.

"The Warrawong Community Kitchen is a lively place to be as it provides free nutritious meals four days a week to around 60 disadvantaged people living in and around the Warrawong area," Janet Jackson, Community Health Promotion Officer said.

"The Kitchen offers a regular, healthy meal that many people would not otherwise have been able to access. Some of our customers say they actually feel healthier and happier since coming to the kitchen."

Volunteers prepare meals with some food donated from local businesses and the community.

Funding has been obtained to research and document benefits the kitchen provides to local residents, and it is hoped the results will provide evidence to support ongoing financial support of the project.

South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Area Health Services staff have the opportunity of being able to support the kitchen through a tax deductible payroll deduction of as little as \$2 per pay fortnight. To find out more contact Janet Jackson on 4274 0281 (jacksonj@iahs.nsw.gov.au). ♦

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