

Illawarra  
Division of  
General  
Practice

PO Box 1198  
Wollongong



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## Newsletter of the IDGP Community Consultative Committee



The Community Consultative Committee (CCC) is a group of community members who meet regularly with the IDGP and local GP representatives. The link opens the lines of communication between the community and GPs and allows items of concern and/or interest to be discussed. This is designed to foster understanding and goodwill between the consumers (users of medical services) and the medical fraternity (the providers of medical services).

If you have a concern with the provision of health services (eg. shortage of GPs) or require information that will help with your understanding of the provision of health services (eg. bilingual GPs in your area), or simply see a better way to provide specific services we are interested in hearing from you.

We are also always interested in hearing from people who are interested in joining the Committee, if you would like more information please contact us:

**P: 4220 7600**

**F: 4226 9485**

**E: [ccc@idgp.org.au](mailto:ccc@idgp.org.au)**

## EDITORIAL

The Australian Government's push for broad reform and a sustainable health system is welcome. We need things to change; we need health care to work without bankrupting the nation or its individual citizens. Outcomes point to where the buck really stops - at every cancelled operation, every year on a dental waiting list, every missed opportunity to provide preventative healthcare, every drug not listed on the PBS; the buck of inadequate healthcare stops with us the consumer.

Excellence in healthcare and our Medicare and social security systems exist side by side with the flaws in our current system - the pressures on resource-strained hospitals and the woeful lack of attention to areas like mental health, aged care and drug and alcohol treatment services.

One of our committee members resigned recently. She had actually retired but found herself compelled to rejoin the staff of a local nursing home which was having difficulty maintaining their high standard of care because of shortages of RNs. She spoke of the need to keep patients in familiar surroundings to prevent disorientation and fear.

"They deserve dignity rather climbing off the hospital trolley to look for a toilet. If only we had more doctors who had time to visit nursing homes. I had a doctor visit his patient at 8 pm after a hectic day at his surgery. That is not a life for anyone, he looked exhausted."

The IDGP has pursued the issue of shortage of doctors vigorously. But whichever government comes to power after the Federal election the challenge remains for reform of the healthcare system.

**Patricia Noferi**  
Chairperson/Editor  
August 2010

## Illawarra Family Doctor Awards 2010

We are pleased to announce the Family Doctor Awards for 2010. This event has been run by the Community Consultative Committee in conjunction with the IDGP for many years now.

The Family Doctor Awards provide an avenue for local GPs and Practices to be recognised for the outstanding service they provide to our community. It is a wonderful opportunity for our community to commend general practice and the doctors who work in this field. At the same time the Awards help to raise awareness of the dedication, professional skills and caring approach of General Practitioners in the Illawarra.

If you would like to nominate your GP and/or your practice, ask at your surgery for a nomination form, fill it in and send to the IDGP (details on the nomination form). Further information and nomination forms are available from [www.idgp.org.au](http://www.idgp.org.au) or by ringing the IDGP on 4220 7600.



**2009 GP of the Year  
Dr Sajid Azam of Bellambi**



**2009 Practice of the Year  
Fairy Meadow Medical Centre**

## Enduring Guardianship

If you cannot make your own lifestyle decisions because of an accident, illness or disability, you cannot always be sure that family or people important to you will be available or aware of what your wishes would be in the treatment options that may arise. Enduring guardianship allows you to legally appoint a substitute decision maker of your choice to make those lifestyle and health care decisions should you lose the capacity to make your own decisions at sometime in the future.

To appoint an enduring guardian, you must sign a form of appointment. You can appoint more than one enduring guardian. The appointees must also sign to show that they have agreed to be your guardian. All signatures on the form must be witnessed by either a legal practitioner or a Registrar of the Local Court.

The enduring guardianship form is an important legal document and should be kept in a safe place, possibly where you keep other important legal documents such as your will and your enduring power of attorney. It is important that your enduring guardian has a copy of the form of appointment and also knows where the original is kept.

**More information is available at [www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au)**

## CHECK IT~ an initiative to promote better health among Illawarra men

As you may be aware, Australian men are notoriously reluctant to be pro-active about their own health – sometimes with fatal consequences. Unlike their female counterparts, they typically ignore symptoms, refuse to talk about health issues, and only visit a doctor when they're at death's door!



A group of Illawarra men and women is determined to do something to change this, and encourage men to be proactive in maintaining their health. A committee has recently been formed locally called Healthier Illawarra Men (HIM) that includes business and community leaders, leading Illawarra medical practitioners and university representatives.

HIM, with support from the Illawarra Division of General Practice (IDGP), is organising a free men's health screening event, called 'CHECK IT' at the WIN Entertainment Centre (WEC) on Friday, 20 August and we are hoping that the event attracts up to 1,000 men on the day, and that it will then set them on a road to better health. We also hope 'CHECK IT' will become an annual event.

Illawarra men of all ages are encouraged to come to the WEC on Friday 20 August between 12noon and 6pm, where they will be able to undertake a variety of screenings, blood tests and other assessments for conditions such as hypertension, obesity, diabetes, and seek advice and information on depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol and drug dependency. CHECK IT will be staffed by specialists and health professionals, assisted by medical, nursing and health and behavioural science students from the University of Wollongong.



This event is not designed to take the place of medical care provided by GPs. Rather, this event is about changing the behaviour of Australian men and getting them to take notice of their health; for their own benefit, and their families. All men attending 'CHECK IT' will be encouraged to see their GP for follow up treatment and advice if needed.

*"A bloke is like a bike, both need maintenance."*

**Special guest speaker and grand prix champion Wayne Gardner**

**Other featured guests and speakers include:**

- WIN Television's **Geoff Phillips**
- Nutritionist **Suzie Burrell**
- Men's health consultant **Greg Milan**
- Former political leader **John Brogden**
- Hawks Captain and Coach **Mat Campbell and Gordie McLeod**

### Details of the Event:

**DATE:** Friday 20 August 2010  
**TIME:** 12pm - 6pm  
**VENUE:** WIN Entertainment Centre

For further information or to pre-register for group bookings call the organisers on 4221 1300 or visit:

[www.checkit.org.au](http://www.checkit.org.au)

## Hydrotherapy

Aquatic Physiotherapy or Hydrotherapy is increasingly popular in the Illawarra. As an exercise based therapy conducted in a heated pool (temperature varies usually between 28° and 34°) clients learn movement and exercise skills to reduce functional impairments.

Hydrotherapy is not "land exercises in water" and is different to aqua-aerobics, as an individual assessment performed by a physiotherapist targets specific needs that are agreed to by the client and therapist, with re-assessment regularly undertaken. Thoughtfully conducted exercises using resistance, buoyancy, hydrostatic pressure and the pool environment are used to produce solid therapeutic outcomes. Small groups (6-7 clients) develop a sense of fun in the water, combined with less formality in the pool; participants can exercise for between 30 and 55 minutes.

Hydrotherapy promotes self-efficacy and improvement in quality of life. It is often a valuable stepping stone for de-conditioned individuals to achieve benefits and be able to progress to land based exercise programs.

Clients range from athletes to people with spinal cord injuries. Other common presentations are low back disorders, arthritis especially hip and knee, post surgery, initial exercise after a fractured pelvis or for fractures post cast removal and trauma victims with multiple areas. While there are few absolute contra-indications to aquatic physiotherapy, medical screening by a GP is recommended to ensure safe participation in a water based exercise program. Open wounds, unstable epilepsy, phobia of water, significant cardiac or respiratory disease and incontinence would preclude some clients.



Access to aquatic physiotherapy is through both public and private services, referred by GPs and on a self referred basis. An increasing body of evidence for aquatic physiotherapy is building.

Recently, at the National Physiotherapy Conference: "Positive Outcomes for post-operative recovery of function for total knee replacement patients using a vigorous hydrotherapy program" was presented showing the benefits of this therapy.

**Steve Campbell is a Manipulative Physiotherapist who has been supervising water based exercise programs since 1989.**

## Are you at risk of type II diabetes?

If you're trying to lose weight and gain more energy, then a **Lifestyle Modification Program** is a great way to make it happen. Designed to help people aged 40-49 turn their health around, the program is not about losing as much weight as you can in the shortest amount of time, but rather how to reach a healthy weight and live a healthy lifestyle for the rest of your life.

If you are interested in joining a Lifestyle Modification program, there are a few simple things you need to do first:

- Complete the AUSDRISK questionnaire by visiting the website listed below or talk to your GP
- If you score 12 or more on the questionnaire, visit your GP to rule out diabetes
- Once diabetes is ruled out, your GP can enrol you in a local Lifestyle Modification Program

For further information, please contact the IDGP on 4220 7600 or email [idgp@idgp.org.au](mailto:idgp@idgp.org.au)

**Visit [www.newleaseoflife.com.au](http://www.newleaseoflife.com.au) to undertake this simple survey.**

# House Call

