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Monthly newsletter of the Illawarra Division of General Practice - April 2008

Now Open headspace Illawarra Youth Health Centre

GPs in the Illawarra now have a new referral option for young patients; headspace Illawarra. Young people aged 12-25 with a Mental Health Care Plan can be referred for clinical psychology services. Other services include counselling for substance abuse and detox coordination and rehabilitation.

Youth workers can carry out psychosocial assessments, coordinate vocational assistance, and assist with access to a wide range of youth health and welfare services. For more information or to make a referral contact headspace Illawarra Youth Health Centre on 02 4225 1184.

Hanging up the stethoscope

After working as a GP for 46 years, Ramnik Shah is "hanging up his stethoscope". Dr Shah has been working in his Figtree practice for over 30 years. Having developed wonderful friendships

he approaches retirement with treasured memories. The Division would like to wish him well with his retirement and thank him for his contribution to the community. Dr Shah's practice will close its doors on March 28. Patients have been urged to obtain copies of their medical records by providing a written request from their new GP.

Improving Immunisation

The latest childhood Immunisation rate for the Division rose to 91% (November quarter). This is an increase of 1.5% from the previous year. Congratulations to the practices who are striving to keep children in the community vaccinated.

2008 Illawarra Diabetes Patient Information Booklet and Service Directory – out now

This useful little reference will provide your newly diagnosed diabetes patients (or perhaps long term patients needing a

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gentle prod) with information about managing diabetes, IFG and IGT as well as a directory of local allied health services and programs. Copies are being distributed to IDGP members. The service directory is also available on the IDGP website www.idgp.org.au

Home Medicines Reviews (HMR) take off in the Illawarra

The Illawarra has seen a 30% increase in GP participation in HMR since the beginning of 2006 and currently over 55 GPs regularly refer their patients for HMR. For further information on how you can become involved in HMR please call Karina on 4226 7052 or email kbronska@idgp.org.au

Help for Veterans to manage multiple medicines

From the 1st of March 2008 eligible Veterans have been able to access free Dose Administration Aids through

pharmacies. Under the new system Veterans must be identified to potentially benefit from a DAA through a HOME MEDICINES REVIEW. If appropriate, a doctor may request an authority for a program trial. This is done the same way as for other medical prescriptions, and will be for a period of time rather than a quantity. For more details see the DVA website <http://www.dva.gov.au/health/DAA/index.htm> or contact Karina at the IDGP on 4226 7052.

GP referrals for MBS covered MRI services now on hold

During the election period, the former Minister for Health and Ageing announced that General Practitioners would be able to request two Medicare Benefits Schedule items relating to MRI services from 1 January 2008. As the implementation process had not been finalised by the former Government, current arrangements for requests of MRI scans, as outlined in the

MBS book (1 November 2007), will continue to apply. The new Government will consider this issue further before acting to implement or vary the previous Government's commitment.

2008 Education Diary Procedures

By now you would have received a letter from the Division outlining the new education diary management system to be implemented in 2008. We urge you to check our website's Calendar of Events at www.idgp.org.au to view all known meetings that will run in the Illawarra, and support those meetings detailed on this site. Pharmaceutical events that are included on the calendar have followed the registration process. The New Year has also seen our wonderful education coordinator Carolyn move onto greater endeavours. If you have any questions regarding education please contact Alison or Kellie at the Division on 4226 7052.

Practice Nurse Medicare Item Number – 10997 (\$10.60)

This item number is for the provision of monitoring and support to people with a chronic disease by a practice

nurse or registered Aboriginal Health Worker, on behalf of a GP. Patients must have a GP Management Plan in place, and can visit the practice nurse up to 5 times a calendar year to receive services such as self management advice, checks on clinical progress, monitoring medication compliance and collection of information to support GP reviews of Care Plans. For further information please contact Anne on 4226 7052 or visit the IDGP website www.idgp.org.au - latest news section.

2007/08 'Diabetes Management in General Practice' guidelines

This handy booklet, produced by the RACGP and Diabetes Australia, has been updated and the format improved. A list of changes to this edition can be found on the IDGP website. Of note is a reduction in the triglycerides goal to <1.5mmol/L. Copies are available free from the RACGP, phone 03 86990508/ 03 86990495 or can be downloaded from their website www.racgp.org.au/publications/guidelines.

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Making the minutes count - helping patients quit smoking

You may have 30-60 seconds to raise the topic of smoking cessation with your patients so don't spend time trying to figure out the right thing to say - someone has done that for you! Practical tips for you to use with patients during those 30-60 seconds were presented at an IDGP seminar by Professor Nick Zwar. To get them contact Linda Blackmore at the Division. Remember, 3 minutes or less of GP time produces a quit rate of 13%.

Men's health: GP Summary Guides available

Andrology Australia has produced a series of summary guidelines to help GPs in the diagnosis, management and treatment of their male patients in primary care with sexual and reproductive health problems.

The GP Summary guides are available to download from the Andrology Australia website (www.andrologyaustralia.org) but are now also available in hard copies. Guidelines are only available to registered health professionals. To order your free set of the guides, please contact Andrology Australia on ph: 1300 303 878.

Refugee Health News

On most months, refugees arrive in the Illawarra from Barundi, Togo and Burma. Locally, we use a model of GP-managed care providing screening, immunisation and referral. Local guidelines have been developed by Dr Craig Boutlis, TWH. A dedicated group of local GPs, including Vicki Wighton and Ohnmar Gaing has made a big contribution to refugee care. GPs can claim \$204 for a refugee health assessment. Contact Linda Blackmore lblackmore@idgp.org.au if you would like to work with refugees.