

# Brevis



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

## **Diabetes Australia Illawarra Support Centre Open**

The Illawarra Diabetes Support Centre was officially opened on May 16 2008 in Wollongong. Residents will now have access to products and subsidised items, such as blood glucose strips, through the National Diabetes Services Scheme and the latest educational material on diabetes management.

Wollongong has a large concentration of diabetic patients, where prevalence rates are around 5.5% compared with the national average rate of 3.75%. The Diabetes Support Centre is located at 3 Station Street (near Crown St), Wollongong.

Ph: **4226 4379**. Open 10am-2pm Mon-Fri.

## **AMSA (Australian Medical Students' Association) 'Get a GP' Campaign**

The AMSA (Australian Medical Students Association) has launched a 'Get a GP' campaign to recognise the importance of medical students (and doctors) having their own GP. It will

soon launch a website listing general practices willing to welcome and bulk bill medical students.

The Dean of University of Wollongong's Graduate School of Medicine, Prof Liz Farmer, naturally concerned for the welfare of our local medical students, seeks our help in further supporting them and commends this campaign for our consideration. To enrol your practice, go to <http://www.amsa.org.au/community-getagp.php#2>

## **Practice Support Services Reach Record High**

The 2007-2008 period has seen a 127% increase in occasions of support delivered to Illawarra practices. In total, 589 occasions of support were provided excluding immunisation, which in itself, accounted for a further 191 occasions of support, a 91% increase from the previous year. This increased support reflects the value of our practice support team in assisting practices to manage new initiatives and workforce pressures.

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## **Medicare Item Looks to Prevention**

The Type 2 Diabetes Risk Evaluation (Item 713, \$60 payment) was introduced to the MBS on July 1. This item targets patients aged 40-49 who are at high risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes. It is mandatory to assess the risk using the Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool (AUSDRISK). This can be obtained from [www.health.gov.au/epc](http://www.health.gov.au/epc) or from the Practice Support Team at the Division. The Lifestyle Modification Program (LMP) to which high risk patients can be referred, is in the process of being developed and the Division will advise of details as the service becomes available. A positive step towards diabetes prevention!

## **Keeping Kids Healthy**

The Healthy Kids Check was introduced to the MBS on July 1 and is a once only health check conducted on a patient who has received their four year old immunisation. It can be performed by the GP (Item 709, \$45 payment) or the Practice Nurse (Item 711). A “Get set 4 Life” resource

kit needs to be provided during the check and these can be ordered by emailing [resourcekits@health.gov.au](mailto:resourcekits@health.gov.au). Please contact the Division’s practice support team on **4226 7052** for further information.

## **Dental Services Under Medicare for People with Chronic Conditions**

On the 19th June 2008 the Senate disallowed the Government to terminate the Medicare dental scheme and as a result the item numbers have continued to be available as per the previous arrangements until further notice. More information is expected after Parliament resumes on 26th August 2008 but it appears that the scheme will finally be closed to all patients. Medicare is unable to confirm whether patients who are in the process of accessing the item numbers will be able to continue with their treatment.

## **Correct Claiming of Medicare Level C and D Attendance Items**

The Federal Government has issued a fact sheet relating to the correct claiming of Medicare Group A1-level C and D items. These items are for use with patients whose consult lasts more than 20 minutes and where the doctor is able to comprehensively document the clinical consideration given to each issue discussed. GPs are asked to consider if peers would deem the item use appropriate for the treatment provided and the consult claimed. To access the fact sheet go to: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Fact\\_Sheet\\_Level\\_C\\_and\\_D](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Fact_Sheet_Level_C_and_D)

## **ARCHI**

GPs will soon have access to the ARCHI (Australian Resource Centre for Healthcare Innovations) website <http://www.archi.net.au>. This is a NSW Health supported website which provides evidence based information and resource dissemination related to innovative health care delivery. NSW Health has agreed to waive membership costs for Divisions and GPs to access the website for a period of time. During this time they will monitor the use by Divisions and GPs, and hope to increase the primary care content on the website.

Log in details for GPs will be via a new email address [gparchi@idgp.org.au](mailto:gparchi@idgp.org.au). Further details on this will be disseminated as information becomes available through NSW Health.

## **Measles Update**

Australia is on track to eliminate measles. Last year in NSW there were only 4 notified cases in all. In the first six months of this year there have been 38 cases. If you suspect a patient to have measles you should.

- Isolate the patient
- Notify the Public Health Unit at **4221 6700**;
- Arrange urgent tests

Practices are encouraged to opportunistically immunise individuals born during or after 1966 who have not previously had measles or who are yet to have their 2 doses of MMR vaccine.

## **Diabetes Management**

Copies of the Diabetes Management in General Practice 2007/08 booklet produced by the RACGP and Diabetes Australia are available from the Division. Please email your request to [practicesupport@idgp.org.au](mailto:practicesupport@idgp.org.au).

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## HPV Vaccination Program Ending

The funded general practice HPV vaccination program is due to finish on 30 June 2009. Female patients (12 to 26 years old) need to complete their course of 3 injections before then. New patients, who have not had any HPV vaccinations, need to allow 6 months to complete the course. No free HPV vaccinations will be available (outside the school based program) after 30 June 2009. There will not be a catch up program funded by the government so please remind patients to initiate their 3 dose course prior to January 2009.

## NEAMI

Neami Illawarra provides a range of psychosocial rehabilitation services to consumers with a mental illness through programs including the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program (PHaMs). PHaMs supports people with a severe functional limitation resulting from a mental illness. There is an emphasis on community support, social connection and enhancing personal self reliance

and independence. Support is not restricted to occasions of service and at this stage, PHaMs covers only those residing within the postcode areas of 2500, 2529 & 2533.

Phone Neami Illawarra on **02 42263277** or visit the Neami website **[www.neami.org.au](http://www.neami.org.au)** for more information.

## Education Update

aashm & SESIAHS - One day Course in HIV Medicine. Saturday 18 October 2008. Register online at **[www.ashm.org.au/courses](http://www.ashm.org.au/courses)** or visit the Divisions website **[www.idgp.org.au](http://www.idgp.org.au)** for more information.

Black Dog Institute - Clinical Attachment Program. For more information phone **02 9382 4518** or visit their website **[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)**