



*Australia's general practice immunisation newsletter*

**Contents**

[National Divisions Immunisation Workshop](#)

[Update on the HPV Vaccine Program](#)

- [HPV Vaccine school program timetable](#)

[Influenza season](#)

[NCIRS Fact Sheets](#)

[Australian General Practice Network Forum](#)

[Highlights of the SBOIC May face to face meeting](#)

**National Divisions Immunisation Workshop 2007**

***Unleashing the Power of Divisions***

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> (evening) and Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2007**

**Novatel Pacific Resort**

**Coffs Harbour NSW**

***Unleashing the Power of Divisions*** is the theme for the National Divisions Immunisation Workshop for 2007. This is an ideal time for all immunisation program officers to participate in professional development and improve their knowledge of immunisation issues. This is an annual event designed to bring the immunisation network together to discuss ideas, upgrade knowledge and share resources. The Workshop provides an excellent opportunity for all delegates to work together to improve immunisation strategies and resources with the ultimate aim of increasing the coverage rates and fight against complacency.

The Immunisation Workshop will begin on Wednesday evening 29<sup>th</sup> August with an informal networking dinner and presentations from divisions. The main meeting will start on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> August at 7.30 am with a breakfast session and continue until 2.30 pm. The early start and early finish is designed to allow delegates to catch flights out of Coffs Harbour to make other connections in Sydney.

Our breakfast speaker will be Dr Raymond Seidler who runs a busy general practice in Kings Cross in Sydney. He will be speaking about the importance of immunisation and General Practice for maintaining and improving public health.

**Helen Moore - Principal Advisor – Immunisation, AGPN Ltd**

Contact details: ☎ 02 6228 0833 📠 02 6228 0899 ✉ [hmoore@agpn.com.au](mailto:hmoore@agpn.com.au)

Information contained within this newsletter is intended to inform you on immunisation issues with a national perspective. As such, it is possible that some references will require adjustment to be made specifically accurate for service providers in each individual State or Territory jurisdiction. For further clarification, contact your SBO Immunisation Coordinator or jurisdiction Health Department.

AGPN is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing

Other items on the program following the breakfast session include;

**Which were the vaccines of the year?** This is a review of HPV, Rotavirus and the new publications (Myths and Realities and the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the Australian Immunisation Handbook).

**Collaboration is the name of the Game** – working with councils, State Health and other stakeholders to further the immunisation coverage in your division.

**Vaccine Management – Making every shot count!** This is the final report of the joint venture between ODGP and Queensland Health. This report covers all aspects of vaccine management and the development of an effective process to ensure that every vaccine is a good vaccine.

**Are you prepared for a disaster situation?** Whether it is a cyclone, an earthquake, a pandemic influenza situation or a bushfire, all divisions and practices practice staff need to have some ideas of processes which will need to be implemented.

**Flu Season for 2008 – let's get organised!** This will be an early information session for all divisions so we can be proactive for the next years flu season.

**Immunisation training for practice nurses.** The Western Australian Department of Health has developed a training package in conjunction with the universities with the aim of standardising and streamlining immunisation training for nurses.

**Vaccines – this is no time for complacency!** NCIRS will look at some vaccine history, the current trials of vaccines in Australia and what has been achieved over the past 10 years.

**Register now! Fill in registration and accommodation forms which are attached to this newsletter's email. The forms are also available on the AGPN website;**

<http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=2506#NDIW>

Information on the venue can be found at

<http://www.pacificbayresort.com.au/index.html>

## Update on the HPV Vaccine Program

School-based vaccinations are underway as part of the National HPV Vaccination Program. The Program has started in schools in South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory, with the ACT and West Australia to follow shortly.

Public response to radio and print advertising about the vaccination program has been strong. In the first month since advertising appeared, the National Immunisation Infoline received more than 3,500 calls about the program. A high proportion of these were from women aged 19-26, who will also be eligible for the free vaccine from July this year. This suggests there will be significant demand for the vaccine from GPs and immunisation providers for this age group.

Many of the most common questions asked were medical. Callers asked:

- About side effects: what side effects had been reported, and whether there were any long-term complications and effects;
- About how the vaccine had been trialled – where trials were conducted, over what time period, who conducted trials and how results could be accessed;
- If a booster dose would be needed in the future; and
- If the vaccine was a 'live' vaccine.

There are answers to these and other questions for GPs and immunisation providers in the ***Immunisation Provider Guidelines – Cervical Cancer Vaccination National HPV Vaccination Program***, which is available from the GP page of the website – [www.australia.gov.au/cervicalcancer](http://www.australia.gov.au/cervicalcancer) .

There is also a vaccination program 'Cheat Sheet' which can be downloaded from the site. This cheat sheet will be distributed to all divisions in the next few weeks so that the immunisation program officer can distribute them to practices.

The Immunise Australia National Infoline is 1800 671 811.

A second HPV vaccine will be available later this year. Cervarix (GSK) will be available on the private market initially. GPs or providers who require information on this vaccine or the differences between the 2 vaccines now available can access the NCIRS website and check the HPV fact sheet.

[http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/hpv\\_jan\\_2007.pdf](http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/hpv_jan_2007.pdf)

**The General Practice program will begin in July 2007 with GPs being asked to vaccinate all girls and women aged 18 to 26 plus those over 12 who are no longer at school or have missed their age group vaccination for some other reason. The GP program will only continue until June 2009. After this date there will be no funded vaccine available for the older age groups. The HPV program will continue as a funded vaccine for girls in their first year of secondary school only as a school based program. GPs will still be able to provide the vaccine privately.**

The previous issue of *the finer point*, (number 122) included a chart of the school based program. Due to the interest and number of questions related to the HPV program, the same chart and related information is included in this issue as well. It is added at the end of the newsletter.

## Influenza

Winter is almost here and the cool air should be a reminder about influenza vaccination time. The main focus for the fight flu campaign this year is to make sure that ALL people who work in the health care area are vaccinated to protect not just themselves, but those they have a duty of care to protect.

Remember, influenza is not a cold. It is a highly contagious disease and vaccination is the most effective protection.

The National Institute for Clinical Studies (NICS) has developed a website to provide the facts about influenza, dispel the myths and provide some tools to help fight flu. <http://www.fightflu.com.au>

## NCIRS Fact Sheets

To update your knowledge, don't forget that the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) provides expert and relevant information concerning immunisation and vaccine preventable diseases. The centre produces Fact Sheets which are an excellent resource.

The NCIRS website can be found at <http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/> and the Fact Sheets can be accessed directly at [http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/f-fact\\_sheets.html](http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/f-fact_sheets.html)

## Australian General Practice Network Forum

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual General Practice Forum will be held in Hobart from **15-18 November 2007**. This Forum will host a range of keynote speakers, guaranteed to challenge and inspire delegates. There are two focal themes, firstly, 'Doing Division Business Better' and secondly the 'Future Focus and Profile of the Network'. The focus on divisional work will include; sustainability of team-based care, building strategic relationships, making best practice easy practice and the overall future direction of the Network.

Information on the program, accommodation and associated events can be found on the website at <http://www.gpnetworkforum.com.au/site/index.cfm>

## Highlights of the SBOIC May face to face meeting

The immunisation coordinators from each SBO recently made their way to Canberra for the May face to face meeting. This meeting was highly productive and jam packed full of external visitors:

- Sean Tarrant and Margaret Smith from Medicare Australia came to discuss calculations and reports as well as some of the changes and issues associated with ACIR.
- Officers from the Department of Health and Ageing – Ian Krebs, Emily Gears, and Wally Dankiw also came to discuss possible funding for hard to reach groups as well as issues around immunising immigrants and refugees.
- CSL presented the education packages they have developed for GPs and practice nurses on HPV and Rotavirus and the vaccines available for these.
- Jan Pappin and Jon Hayres from Sanofi also dropped in to present a new interactive CD Rom they have developed – Strive for 5, keeping the cold chain which will serve as an Active Learning Module with 30 category one points for GPs.
- Maryanne Williams from the Limestone Coast Division came to discuss the Pandemic Flu Exercise run at Hawkins Medical Centre, and
- Kristine Macartney from NCIRS came to discuss the progress of the Immunisation Handbook and the Myths and Realities publication.

Other hot topics included the National Divisions Immunisation workshop to be held in Coffs Harbour from 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> August 2007, QDGP's Vaccine Management project KISS – Keep It Simple & Safe, as well as the upcoming roll out of the HPV and rotavirus vaccines through general practice starting 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007.

## HPV Vaccine program

State/Territory	Second Term commences	Vaccination begins	Years participating 2007	Years participating 2008
ACT	30 April	From 30 April	7, 10, 11, 12	7, 9, 10
NSW	23 April	17 May (metro), rural areas TBC	10, 11, 12	7, 8, 9, 10
NT	16 April	From 16 April	10, 11, 12#	7, 8, 9, 10
QLD	16 April	From 17 April	10, 11, 12	8, 9, 10
SA	30 April	From 2 April	8 to 12	8
Tasmania	Easter break: 6 to 10 April*	From 11 April	7, 10, 11, 12	7, 9, 10
Victoria	16 April	From 16 April	7, 10, 11, 12	7, 9, 10
WA	23 April	From 1 May	10, 11, 12#	7, 8, 9, 10
<p>*Second term in Tasmania commences 18 June; vaccination program will begin following Easter break</p> <p># In some small regions the whole school will be vaccinated in 2007</p> <p>Note that the HPV vaccine will also be added to the ongoing immunisation schedule for 12-13 year olds from 2008</p>				

The optimum vaccination schedule is three doses given over six months, at 0, 2 and 6 months. However, in order to fit three doses into the 2007 school year most states and territories will adhere to a compressed vaccination schedule, with doses given at 0, 1 and 4 months. This will not affect the efficacy of the vaccine.

The school-based program is the primary mechanism for delivering the vaccine to 12-18 year old girls. Parents of girls in this age group are best advised to have their daughters vaccinated at school. However, GPs may be asked to administer the vaccine to girls who are no longer at school, or who have missed doses.

The General Practice program will begin in July 2007 with GPs being asked to vaccinate all girls and women aged 18 to 26 plus those over 12 who are no longer at school or have missed their age group vaccination for some other reason.

**The GP program will only continue until June 2009. After this date there will be no funded vaccine available for the older age groups. The HPV program will continue as a funded vaccine for girls in**

**their first year of secondary school only as a school based program. GPs will still be able to provide the vaccine privately.**

Up to date information on the programs can be found on the Department of Health and Ageing web site [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/gardasil\\_hpv.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/gardasil_hpv.htm)

Information on the relationship between Human Papillomavirus and cervical cancer and the vaccine can be found on the NCIRS fact sheet site; [http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/hpv\\_oct\\_2006.pdf](http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/hpv_oct_2006.pdf)

**It is very important to continue to stress the need for all women aged between 18 and 69 to continue with their regular Pap smear tests whether or not they have been vaccinated.**

The vaccine that is currently available is licensed for girls 9 to 26 year of age. Although it is licensed for boys 9 to 15 it is not funded for this group.

Collection of the data associated with this vaccine will provide information on the success of the program in later years and also a method of ensuring reminders are sent and all doses of the vaccine are given. All providers are asked to submit the data associated with this vaccine.

GPs can expect to receive further information via direct mailout from the Department of Health and Ageing in the coming weeks.

A dedicated page for GPs, and a downloadable 'cheat sheet' is available from the campaign website – [www.australia.gov.au/cervicalcancer](http://www.australia.gov.au/cervicalcancer) - the website also includes detailed information for parents, young women and girls.

**Information is also available from the Immunise Australia National Infoline on 1800 671 811.**