

# Consumer Health Network..... a consumer voice for general

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**BULLETIN NO. 11 – April 2005**

### Palliative Care

National Palliative Care Week 2005 (22-29 May) will focus on the many wonderful people who are doing and have done a magnificent job in caring for the terminally ill people throughout Australia. The theme *Partners in Caring* has been chosen to highlight those who play a role in caring for someone with a terminal illness - family, friends, health professionals and volunteers. No matter how big or small a role, their contribution as a *Partner in Caring*, is significant and palliative care in Australia would be very different without this contribution.

Locally the West Vic Division is working with Wimmera Hospice Care and Central Grampians Palliative Care Service on a rural palliative care project. We are trialling a patient held record, providing education sessions for GPs, nurses, personal care attendants and other health professionals, developing networks to improve communication and developing information resources for consumers and carers.

### How can you help?

Attached to this newsletter is:

1. a draft flier promoting palliative care services
2. a survey
3. a replied paid return envelope.

We ask that you take the time to look at the flier and consider carefully the questions in the survey. Please complete the survey and return to us (in the envelope) by 31 May. The lucky person whose survey is drawn "out of a hat" on 1 June will receive a \$20 voucher to a "Target" store. We welcome any comments you care to give, and hope that you will assist us by completing the survey.

We hope this information will encourage patients with a life limiting illness, carers, families and friends to seek help earlier rather than later.

### Consumer Focus Group

West Vic Division of General Practice will be holding a series of focus group to explore problems the community may have in accessing doctors ie transport, bulkbilling, physical access, waiting times. Several focus groups will be held throughout the Division area. Participants will be paid \$25 to attend, plus travel costs (if over 10km from the venue). Anyone interested in taking part is asked to contact Annette Metcalfe on 53524804.

### New Phone Line for Medicine Enquiries

Consumers now have a number to phone when wanting more information about medicines. The Medicines Line gives you confidential information about prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines and herbal medicines. You can ask how your medicine works, how best to use the medicine, side effects and much more. It is not an emergency service, and does not replace advice from your doctor and pharmacist. This service is offered by the National Prescribing Service. Phone 1300 888 763 Monday to Friday from 9am until 6pm EST.

**Enquiries regarding the Consumer Health Network can be directed to Annette Metcalfe, West Vic Division of General Practice phone: 53524804 or PO Box 127, Ararat, 3377 or a.metcalfe@westvicdiv.asn.au.**