



Australian Divisions of General Practice

# Rural Palliative Care Program NEWSLETTER

Issue 1

August 2004

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ADGP is pleased to present the first issue of the Rural Palliative Care Program Newsletter. It is a critical period of time for the eight projects as they are all about to implement strategies and service models that have, up until now, only been theoretical concepts for their service providers. As well as launching brand new services the projects also have the added pressure of reports which are due 31st August. We are comforted by the fact that each project is going to meet the reporting deadline and therefore we are not overburdening them. The following months will see an increase in activity moving from theoretical to practical application and the associated review and redevelopment that is often required to ensure improved outcomes. Within this newsletter we have highlighted some of the interesting aspects of the projects' progress to date.

This newsletter will be published quarterly throughout the life of the RPC Program.

## Project Updates

### SOUTHERN OLD RURAL DGP

- Project is expected to go live in the third week of September.
- A resource kit for health professionals has been developed.
- Toowoomba Hospice has agreed to triage the after hours. Initially they will not receive funding for this service, but in the long term the project will need to seek funding from appropriate source.
- PaICIS will be loaded onto Toowoomba Hospice network.
- This project will be using palm pilots to gather patient data.
- Education day for GPs, RNs and ENs has been organised for 9th October and will be run by Liz Raymond from Mount Olivett Hospice.

### NORTH WEST TAS DGP

- Two pilot sites are ready to go live in September.
- Multidisciplinary meetings will commence shortly.
- This project will not be using PaICIS. They are using a specially formulated database.
- An issue at present is how to obtain EPC submission records. Strategies are currently being developed.

### EASTERN GOLDFIELDS MED DGP

- PaICIS is up and running. Staff training on PaICIS was completed in July.
- GPs have started involvement in case conferencing.
- ADGP's pallcare list server has been well received at EGMDGP.
- Palm pilots will be used in this project to gather patient data.



## WEST VIC NSW DGP

- Education sessions for GPs and health professionals have commenced and have gone well.
- The project has put a lot of work into the patient held record which is on track for when Project goes live.
- They have been working on the multidisciplinary case conferencing and have commitment from General Practice.
- The first multidisciplinary discipline education session is scheduled for 6th September.

## ADELAIDE HILLS DGP

- Service due to go live 1st September.
- Evaluation of data collected is the main issue at the moment. CHSD visited this Project on the 24th August.
- PalCIS has been received and installed.
- The project team is considering the use of palm pilots to gather patient data
- Project is currently working on the patient held medical record.

## SOUTH EAST NSW DGP

- The project will go live on 30th August.
- The first month's roster for the 24 hour access line has been developed.
- A resource kit has been assembled for each town. (This will include PalCIS software.)
- Palm pilots will be used to gather patient data.
- Media activity was busy last week. The local newspaper published story and photo in Wednesday's paper (25th Aug). A radio interview went to air on Tuesday (24th Aug).

## MID NORTH COAST DGP

- Palliative Care Service will go live 31st August.
- Multidisciplinary meetings with GP input to commence shortly.
- Jane Phillips (Project Coordinator) attended a PalCIS training workshop on Thursday 26 August as the area health authority has agreed to change the present database to PalCIS for the whole area. Other projects were invited to this.
- This project will be using palm pilots to gather patient data.
- Following a lengthy planning and negotiation process the on-call service will be up and running this year.

## PILBARA DGP

- Palliative care education sessions were held in June at Port Hedland Regional Hospital by a Palliative Care Medical Specialist. Education sessions have been scheduled in Pilbara in October for GPs and other health professionals.
- Due to difficulty in accessing software, PalCIS not in place yet.
- The project team is considering the use of palm pilots to gather patient data.
- Three multidisciplinary case conferences have been held in Karratha.
- Ethics committee approval issue has been discussed with CHSD on their visit in June. Currently being followed up.
- Protocols have been developed and incorporated into the Palliative Care Manual.
- Palliative Care kit has been developed for GPs.
- Laminated flyers promoting the 24-hour access line have been produced for GPs and other health professionals.

# RPC Seminar at the ADGP Forum

As part of the *Divisions of General Practice Network Forum 2004* the Rural Palliative Care Program will be holding a Seminar on Thursday 23rd September.

Our guest speakers include:

- Professor David Currow (International Institute of Hospice Studies, Uni of SA; and President, Palliative Care Association of Australia)
- Keith Fletcher (CEO, Murrumbidgee DGP)
- Noel Hicks (GAPS Board member and Community representative)

- Ian Hatton (National Consultant, RPC Program)
- Area Health Authority representative (TBA)

The seminar will be facilitated by Professor Kathy Eager (Centre for Health Service Development, University of Wollongong).

Representatives from each of the eight projects will be attending the Seminar and will have the opportunity to workshop key and common issues.

# PROJECT NEWS

**North West Tasmania Division of General Practice** launched their "Rural Palliative Care Project" (NWRPCP) during Palliative Care Week in Burnie and Devonport.



*Anita Dow and Dr David Saner*

Key partners of the Project got together to meet each other and find out how they could best benefit from and contribute to the success of the NWRPCP.



*Dr Robyn Brogan (Medical Specialist) with local politicians*



*Devonport launch*

**Adelaide Hills Division of General Practice** launched their Rural Palliative Care Project on 9th June 2004, at Mount Barker. The Project was officially launched by the Hon. Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Most patients prefer to remain in their own home environment during their illness, with many choosing to die at home rather than in hospital. If they do require hospitalisation, most prefer to be admitted to their local community hospital, rather than travel to Adelaide. The newly commenced project aims to increase coordination and utilisation of the current services, which in turn will result in improved continuity of care for patients and their families, and a greater choice in site of care and place of death.



*Deb Rawlings (Project Coordinator), Dr Graham Hughes (GP Advisor) and the Hon. Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs*

## New Member to the Reference Group

ADGP is pleased to welcome Dr David Woods to the RPC Program Reference Group. Dr Woods is currently the Medical Specialist for the Tasmanian Palliative Care Service (Northern region). He was formerly a Rural GP in Albany, WA, where he established a multidisciplinary palliative care service. Dr Woods is a member of the National Cancer Strategy Group and formerly Chair of their Palliative Care Medications working group that established the Palliative Care Drugs Section of the PBS. He is also a Council Member of ANZSPM (Australia & New Zealand Society of Palliative Medicine) and has a special interest in information management systems and outcomes measurement in palliative care.

### ADGP CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Coordinator Profile Ms Anita Dow



Anita is the Project Officer for the North West Rural Palliative Care Project (NWRPCP).

Anita completed a Bachelor of Nursing

Degree in 1999 with Australian Catholic University in Ballarat Victoria and then commenced working at the Royal Hobart Hospital. In 2001 Anita returned to the North West to work with the North West Palliative Care Service as a Clinical Nurse. Due to these experiences Anita has a good working knowledge of Palliative Care Provision and many of the issues confronting service delivery and key stakeholders in the region. In addition to this over the last twelve months Anita has been working part-time with Merck Sharp and Dohme as a Medical Representative.