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Australian Divisions of
General Practice Ltd,
PO Box 4308
Manuka ACT 2603
Phone 02 6228 0800
Fax 02 6228 0899
Email
adgpreception@adgp.com.au

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■ CEO's Report

SBO forums

The past fortnight has provided several excellent opportunities for me meet more members of the divisions network through my attendance at the Queensland and New South Wales SBO forums and divisional meetings.

On October 29 I attended the Queensland divisions forum, where it was pleasing to hear Director-General of Queensland Health Dr Steve Buckland reaffirm the importance of primary health care and of the role of general practice and GPs.

Last week I headed to Sydney for the ADGP SBO Coalition meeting, and had an opportunity to meet with NSW divisions at the AGM of the Alliance of NSW divisions. There were significant discussions about the National Primary Care Collaboratives program (see separate report below), and also a real keenness to pursue the development of a national primary health care policy.

I am also planning visits to other states in the near future.

National Primary Care Collaboratives

As a result of input from the divisions network, the National Primary Care Collaboratives (NPCC) Program has increased the level of funding for all divisions involved in the program.

The NPCC has agreed to fund:

- a five-day training course for all Collaborative Program Managers (CPM), including travel and accommodation;
- travel and accommodation for CPMs to attend orientation days and all learning workshops; and
- travel and accommodation for a GP and staff member from each practice participating in the orientation day and three learning workshops.

The NPCC will now be conducted over three waves. Practices participating in each wave will address all three topics in the program, which are cardiovascular disease, diabetes and access.

Professor James A Dunbar from the NPCC has advised that the closing date for applications from divisions interested in being involved in the project has been extended to November 12, 2004.

The application form and guidelines have been revised and are available online at www.npcc.com.au or by phoning 08 8201 7733. For any queries, contact: npcc@flinders.edu.au

ADGP will work closely with the NPCC, SBOs and divisions to ensure that divisions are properly supported throughout the project.

Government liaison

A great deal of my time at the moment is being spent in contract negotiations with the Department of Health and Ageing, including ADGP core funding.

ADGP is also focussing on translating the election commitments made by the re-elected government into new opportunities for the divisions network. We look forward to promoting divisions as an integral part of the government's primary health agenda.

Review Implementation Committee

The ADGP website has established an information page with the latest news and updates from the federal government's [Review Implementation Committee](#).

The Review Implementation Committee is a representative group drawn from the divisions network and the wider primary care system. It was established by the Department of Health and Ageing in July 2004 to provide advice and to guide the implementation of the range of strategies identified in the [government's response to the 2003 Review of the Role of Divisions of General Practice](#).

For more information on the work of the Review Implementation Committee, please contact [Liesel Wett](#), ADGP Deputy CEO, on 02 6228 0800.

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■ Mental Health and Alcohol: Managing the Mix

ADGP's newest program, the National Alcohol and Mental Health Comorbidity Project, has now taken as its working title: *Mental Health and Alcohol: Managing the Mix*.

ADGP has been funded by the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation and other organisations to co-ordinate this national project which aims to:

- raise awareness of the burden of disease associated with alcohol misuse and common mental health comorbidities
- improve the knowledge, skills and capacity of the general practice sector in the prevention and management of these comorbidities

- enhance the range of resources and tools for the prevention and treatment of comorbidity within the general practice setting
- improve local co-ordination, infrastructure and systems for shared care for patients with these conditions
- support GPs and divisions to provide resources to consumers and carers.

Other project partners contributing financially are the Department of Health and Ageing (Drug Strategy Branch; Rural Health & Palliative Care Branch) and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. About \$2.5 million has been made available for the project over an 18-month period.

Other partners involved in this work are the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) (consumer and carer resources) and the Australian Primary Care Resource Centre (PARC), Flinders University (project evaluation).

Extra support provided by the Rural Health and Palliative Care Branch of the Department of Health and Ageing has enabled funding for five more projects than originally anticipated, with ADGP now able to fund 19 projects, representing 33 divisions nationwide.

The selected divisions cover all States and the Northern Territory, and contain substantial numbers of at-risk populations for concurrent alcohol misuse and mental health problems.

ADGP congratulates the following divisions on their successful submissions:

Division¹	State	Rural/urban
NSW Central Coast	NSW	Rural
Central Sydney	NSW	Urban
Canterbury	NSW	Urban
Illawarra	NSW	Rural
Shoalhaven	NSW	Rural
NSW Outback	NSW	Rural
Top End	NT	Urban/rural
Townsville	QLD	Rural
Capricornia	QLD	Rural
Adelaide Northern	SA	Urban/rural
Yorke Peninsula	SA	Rural
Mid North	SA	Rural
Barossa	SA	Rural
GP North Northern Tasmania	TAS	Rural
Mallee	VIC	Rural
Bendigo and District	VIC	Rural
Murray Plains	VIC	Rural
Westgate	VIC	Urban
Western Melbourne	VIC	Urban
Dandenong	VIC	Urban
Greater South Eastern	VIC	Urban
Monash	VIC	Urban
Central Bayside	VIC	Urban
Eastern Ranges	VIC	Urban/rural
Whitehorse	VIC	Urban
Inner Eastern Melbourne	VIC	Urban
Knox	VIC	Urban
Canning	WA	Rural
Perth Central Coastal	WA	Urban

Osborne	WA	Urban
Mid West	WA	Rural
Pilbara	WA	Rural
Eastern Goldfields	WA	Rural

¹ The lead division for each project is indicated in bold. Divisions in regular font are partners with the preceding division.

The official launch and divisions' introduction to the project will take place at a National Comorbidity Workshop and Orientation in Adelaide on 23 and 24 November.

For further information on the project, please contact Slade Carter, Program Officer for *Managing the Mix*, at ADGP on 02 6228 0846; email scarter@adgp.com.au

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■ Aged Care

The Department of Health and Ageing has been reviewing arrangements for the provision of Residential Medication Management Review (RMMR) services. It announced last week that a new collaborative model including GPs and pharmacists will be introduced from 1 July 2005.

Until then the payment structure for pharmacists providing medication management services in aged care homes will remain as is. All providers of RMMR services should have received a letter informing them of these changes.

However, a GP initiated RMMR, MBS Item No. 903, came into effect on 1 November 2004 (see Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing Medical Benefits Schedule Residential Medication Management Review Accessed via internet on 3 Nov. 04 2004 at http://www7.health.gov.au/pubs/mbs/mbsnov04/MBSNov2004_DHTML/MBS_Book_1_Nov_2004_69.htm).

The MBS item - *Residential Medication Management Review (MBS item 903)*, is a voluntary service available to new residents entering aged care homes for the first time and to those already living in care on an 'as required' basis.

Patients will receive a \$75 rebate for participating in collaborative Residential Medication Management Reviews with pharmacists in Commonwealth funded aged care homes.

The RMMR will complement other GP services available to residents of aged care homes including:

- * normal general practice consultation items;
- * Enhanced Primary Care items (for contributing to a care plan and participating in a case conference); and
- * Comprehensive Medical Assessments (MBS item number 712).

For more information go to the Department of Health and Ageing website at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-epc-whatsnew.htm>

RMMR proforma

ADGP is developing an RMMR proforma for dissemination under the CPC suite of templates on Medical Director.

The introduction of this new item will impact on Aged Care GP Panels Coordinators and HMR Coordinators, however ADGP was not made aware that the RMMR had been finalised until last week. ADGP will seek discussions with the Department of Health and Ageing and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to discuss implications and implementation of the new RMMR services.

More information can be obtained from the department website on the link above.

Aged Care Home Survey

The Department of Health and Ageing has contracted with Australian Healthcare Associates to conduct a survey of aged care homes funded under the Initiative.

The survey of aged care homes will provide data for divisions' performance indicators and for tracking the achievements of the Initiative more broadly. It is anticipated that the survey will be administered in late November 2004 with results available in early 2005.

The survey will cover the financial year prior to the implementation of the Aged Care GP Panels Initiative to collect baseline data. It is anticipated that a follow up survey will be conducted within the next 12 to 18 months to determine the progress of the initiative.

Once finalised, the survey will be available on the Department's website.

Statement of Rationale for the Divisions of General Practice Performance Indicators for the Aged Care GP Panels Initiative

The Department of Health and Ageing, in consultation with ADGP, has developed a statement of rationale for the PIs for the Aged Care GP Panels Initiative.

The State and Territory Offices of the Department of Health and Ageing will forward divisions the web-link to access this document.

Division Resources

ADGP and the SBOs would like to thank the many divisions and aged care providers who have generously shared resources they have developed relating to working with the aged care sector.

They have encouraged others to utilise, reproduce, and re-badge these resources to reduce duplication of these tasks. Therefore, out of professional courtesy please acknowledge the original creators when reproducing resources.

ADGP is reformatting its Aged Care web pages so that divisions, GPs & ACHs can easily locate the various resources available. The new look web pages for divisions resources will be active by Friday November 19, 2004.

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■ Medicare Allied Health Items update

The Department of Health and Ageing has provided the following information:

From November 1, diabetes educators joined the list of allied health professionals eligible to provide services under the Medicare allied health and dental care initiative. The new diabetes education MBS item is no.10951.

To be eligible to register with the Health Insurance Commission for the measure, diabetes educators must be Credentialed Diabetes Educators as credentialed by the Australian Diabetes Educators Association (ADEA).

Revised allied health fact sheets and referral forms will be posted on the HIC and DoHA websites as soon as possible. The HIC is in the process of printing new referral forms which include diabetes educators, for distribution to GPs.

Access by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and State/Territory Clinics

ACCHS and State/Territory Government health clinics were recently advised that, where an exemption under subsection 19(2) of the Health Insurance Act 1973 has been granted to an ACCHS or State/Territory Government health clinic, allied health and dental care items 10950-10977 inclusive can be claimed for services provided by eligible allied health professionals and dentists salaried by, or contracted to, the service as long as all requirements of the items are met, including registration with the HIC.

This means that where a patient is being managed by a GP under an EPC multidisciplinary care plan and is referred to an eligible allied health professional or dentist salaried by or contracted to an ACCHS or State/Territory clinic under that care plan, the relevant allied health professional and/or dentist may charge the patient the Medicare rebate for those services (patient assigns benefit to AHP/dentist).

Answers to frequently asked questions

A short set of answers to 'frequently asked questions' on the changes to the initiative has been provided to ADGP and has been posted on the ADGP website under Hot Issues at http://www.adgp.com.au/client_images/16653.pdf It will also appear on the HIC and DoHA websites shortly.

Allied health and dental care MBS items - explanatory notes and item descriptors

A copy of the 1 November 2004 MBS allied health and dental care booklet containing the explanatory notes and items descriptors for the new items was to be mailed to every allied health professional and dentist registered with the HIC to provide services under the measure over the first week in November.

This booklet has been prepared in addition to the main MBS book which medical practitioners are sent a copy of each November. The new 1 November 2004 edition of the MBS book contains short explanatory notes for GPs referring patients to allied health and dental care services under an EPC multidisciplinary care plan, and allied health and dental care item descriptors.

Invitation to nominate representatives for Allied Health and Dental Care Consultative Group

ADGP has been invited to nominate two representatives be part of a new consultative group to address issues which have emerged with the introduction of the new Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items for allied health and dental care services.

The consultative group of representatives from allied health professional (AHP), dental and GP peak bodies aims to meet regularly with the Department and the Health Insurance Commission (HIC) over the next 12 months to aid the transition of allied health and dental care services into the Medicare system.

Issues to be discussed will include:

- improved understanding of the allied health and dental care services and Enhanced Primary Care (EPC) multidisciplinary care planning processes;
- increased awareness of different allied health disciplines and the role they play in chronic disease management;
- improved understanding about Medicare processes (for example, billing/claiming); and
- monitoring and review of the items and the development of strong links between the Department and all stakeholders to enable the dissemination of accurate and timely information.

The first meeting of the group will be held in Canberra in late November 2004.

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■ Conferences and Courses

Bioethics and You: An Open Forum

Gene technology, stem cells and cloning are some of the issues to be discussed at an open forum on bioethics at the Garvan Institute, Darlinghurst, Sydney, on Tuesday November 9, at 7pm.

The free forum, held in association with the 7th World Congress of Bioethics and the University of NSW, will include panellists: Professor John Harris, University of Manchester and UK Human Genetics Commission, Prof Françoise Baylis, Canada Research Chair in Bioethics and Philosophy, Associate Professor John Rasko, physician/scientist in gene therapy, RPA Hospital and Centenary Institute and Dr Kristine Barlwo-Stewart, genetic counsellor, The Centre for Genetics Education, NSW Genetics Service. More information is available at www.bioethicsworldcongress.com

Skin Cancer: Making Spot decisions

Skin cancer, which is diagnosed on about 382,000 new Australians each year, is the topic of a Rural Health Education Foundation broadcast on Tuesday November 9.

The live satellite program will provide information on the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of skin cancer for people living in rural areas.

Tune in at 8pm ACT/NSW/VIC/TAS, 7pm in SA, 7.30pm in the NT and 5pm in WA. on how to view this program, go to www.rhef.com.au/programs/415/415.html or contact the RHEF on 02 6232-5480 or via email rhef@rhef.com.au

Understanding and Managing Psychological Injury

Comcare's National Rehabilitation Conference, 'Understanding and Managing Psychological Injury', will be held on November 11-12 at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra.

Key areas addressed at the conference will be mediation, early intervention, depression in the workplace, creative approaches to conflict resolution, the providers' role and change management. Online registration is available at www.comcare.gov.au

Absolutely Hypertension: An Update on Assessment, Risk and Management

The Rural Health Education Foundation will run a national live satellite television broadcast on Wednesday, November 17 on the topic of hypertension, with an estimated 30 per cent of Australians aged over 25 years having the risk factor.

The broadcast aims to provide an understanding of the absolute risk and the importance of the level of blood pressure as a major determinant of an individual's absolute risk for cardiovascular events. Participants will learn how to conduct an appropriate diagnostic assessment for hypertension, develop a therapeutic plan for patients that balances reduction of blood pressure and absolute cardiovascular risk with a particular emphasis on the potential impact of lifestyle modifications, initiate short and long term follow-up on appropriate drug treatment therapy for patients with hypertension, and implement reassessment and revision of treatment should initial drug treatment fail.

The program will be broadcast at 8pm NSW/VIC/ACT/TAS time, 7pm QLD, 7.30pm SA, 6.30pm NT, and 5pm in WA (repeated at 8pm in WA).

For further information on how to view this program, go to www.rhef.com.au/programs/416/416.html or contact the RHEF on 02 6232-5480 or via email rhef@rhef.com.au

Achieving Efficiencies in Clinical Management: Mobile, Tele and Wireless Technologies

This ARCHI Toolkit seminar will be held at Flemington Racecourse, Melbourne, on November 24-25, with key note speakers: Mr Mark A Zielazinski, CIO, and Mrs Susan Bukunt, Director of Clinical Effectiveness from El Camino Hospital, San Francisco, California USA.

El Camino Hospital is completely wireless and is en route to become paperless and eventually filmless. Doctors carry tablet PCs and handheld devices. At El Camino Hospital IT systems save money and reduce errors.

Early bird registration has been extended to November 10, 2004. Visit the ARCHI website at www.archi.net.au to download programs and information.

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Improving safety and Security in the Health Workplace

The ARCHI Toolkit Seminar, Improving safety and Security in the Health Workplace, will be held on December 9-10 at The Carlton Crest Hotel, Auckland New Zealand.

Early bird registrations close on November 25, 2004. The ARCHI website at www.archi.net.au will provide more information.

Measuring Patient-Centred Health Outcomes Workshop

This workshop, organised by the Australian College of Health Service Executives (NSW Branch), aims to provide a comprehensive introduction for all those interested in the application and use of patient-centred health outcome measures.

The workshop will be held at the Northern Sydney Education Centre, North Ryde, Sydney, on November 19-20. It aims to equip participants with the ability to evaluate and select tests for use in their own workplace, and understand what is required to develop a new instrument. Click on the link for further detail of the content of the workshop: <http://www.rodconnorassoc.com/NovemberWorkshop.pdf>

Registration information may be downloaded from www.rodconnorassoc.com or from the ACHSE website, click on http://www.achse.org.au/nsw/upcoming/nsw19nov04_workshop.pdf Alternatively, contact Myra Read at ACHSE on 02 9805 0431 or email: myread@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Perspectives in Public Health Nutrition: a two-day symposium

This Public Health Nutrition two-day workshop, run by the Australian Public Health Nutrition Academic Collaboration (APHNAC), will be held on April 18-19, 2005, in Canberra.

The workshop aims to develop participants' understanding of emerging issues in public health nutrition, increase participants' knowledge and skills to address public health nutrition priorities, and to inform participants about new advanced 'Public Health Nutrition' training available through the 'Australian Public Health Academic Collaboration' (APHNAC), and the APHNAC network.

Registrations of interest are now being sought by Samantha Battams, Project Manager, PHERP Public Health Nutrition project, c/- Flinders University Dept of Public Health, sam.battams@flinders.edu.au or phone 08 8204 6201.

General Practitioner & Practice Management conference, Egypt

The Australian Egyptian doctors association and the Egyptian consulate in Melbourne are organising a General Practitioner & Practice Management conference in Egypt, from December 31, 2004, to January 19, 2005.

The conference and tour is an educational opportunity for GPs and practice managers, with the theme of 'Paediatrics and practice management'. Those interested can go to www.egyptgp.com, or contact Jennifer Johnson at Flight Centre on 1300 301 900.

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■ Useful Information from Beyond the Network

Call for GPs to participate in innovative research

The Centre for Health Informatics, University of New South Wales is inviting GPs to participate in an innovative research study to determine the clinical impact of an online evidence retrieval system (called Quick Clinical).

For more information and registration please: visit <http://quickclinical.med.unsw.edu.au/QCPR>, email QuickClinical@unsw.edu.au fax your contact details to 02 9385 1813 or call 02 9385 1074.

Some of the benefits of participating in this study include free access to electronic journals, guidelines and textbooks and approved Clinical Audit activity for the RACGP QA&CPD program as a Clinical Audit activity for this triennium. Total points for Steps 1-4: 20 (Group 1).

The chief investigators are Prof. Enrico Coiera, University of New South Wales; Prof. Michael Kidd, University of Sydney; A/Prof. Johanna Westbrook, University of New South Wales; and Prof. Richard Day, University of New South Wales.

Rural and remote health – electronic journal

Rural and Remote Health (RRH), an international electronic journal, is available to subscribers for free and provides peer-reviewed evidence-base articles for rural and remote health.

The only international journal in this field, RRH also invites articles on the interesting research and project work. All articles are subject to peer- review.

For further information, including free registration, please visit <http://rrh.deakin.edu.au> (Click on FREE Registration at the top of the home page)

Privacy Commissioner to seek views about private sector provisions of the Privacy Act

Federal Privacy Commissioner Karen Curtis is asking organisations and individuals for their views about the operation of the private sector provisions of the Privacy Act that came into effect on December 21, 2001.

The Commissioner had released an Issues Paper, including information on how to make a submission, and the details of stakeholder consultation meetings, which is available at <http://www.privacy.gov.au/au/act/review/index.html>

Stakeholder forums will be held around Australia during November and December. The closing date for submissions is December 22, 2004.

Federal Attorney-General Philip Ruddock has also asked the commissioner to review amendments made to the Privacy Act in 2001 which extended its coverage to the private sector. The review findings are due out by March 31, 2005. More information on the review is available at privatesectorreview@privacy.gov.au

Strengthening the economic case for prevention

A new publication from the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) *Chronic Illness: Australia's Health Challenge: The Economic Case for Physical Activity and Nutrition in the Prevention of Chronic Disease* is part of a strategy to encourage more investment in the prevention of chronic disease.

To strengthen the case for greater sustained investment in prevention, the ACDPA has highlighted the need for more evidence of the efficacy of interventions in comparable outcomes measures such as Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) or Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs).

ACDPA member organisations – Diabetes Australia, Kidney Health Australia, National Heart Foundation of Australia, National Stroke Foundation and The Cancer Council Australia – have called for greater funding for the collection and analysis of comparable efficacy data in public health research.

Copies of the ACDPA documents *Chronic Illness: Australia's Health Challenge* are available on ACDPA member websites, including www.heartfoundation.com.au/acdpa or from the ACDPA Executive Officer, Helen Egan ACDPA@heartfoundation.com.au. They were produced with financial support from the Australian Government, Department of Health and Ageing.

Endocrinology guidelines

Therapeutic Guidelines' Endocrinology - Version 3 has now been released, offering updated information for endocrine-related illness.

Major rewrites include areas such as diabetes, osteoporosis, ovarian hormone replacement therapy, overweight and obesity problems, a new chapter on fluid and electrolyte abnormalities and newer medications available for the range of endocrine-related illness.

For more information, visit www.tg.com.au or email sales@tg.com.au

Free dementia videos

The complete series of five Rural Health Education Foundation (RHEF) programs on dementia is still available free of charge on video for Australian health professionals, with support provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

This free VHS video offer will expire on December 31, 2004, or sooner if copies of the programs are exhausted before then.

To order your copies of the dementia programs (one copy per person or organisation only within Australia), please email the RHEF at rhef@rhef.com.au or fax them on 02 6232 5484 providing your name, organisation, postal address, contact telephone number and email address. For further information, go to <http://www.rhef.com.au/news/040413/040413.html> or visit the website home page <http://www.rhef.com.au/>

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■ Staff moves

Michael Janssen, Principal Adviser on Quality Use of Medicines and National Manager of the Medication Management Review (MMR) Facilitator Program is leaving ADGP on November 12.

In his three years with ADGP Michael has been responsible for the development and implementation of a number of new programs, including the MMR Facilitator program which now has over 110 staff in as many divisions around the country promoting the Home Medicine Review MBS item, and the Enhanced Divisional Quality Use of Medicines (EDQUM) pilot now managed by ADGP project officer Mark Daddo.

ADGP will announce interim arrangements concerning its MMR program in the near future. In the meantime divisions and divisional facilitators should continue to refer enquiries to their State Guild or SBO MMR facilitator.

Michael will be taking up the newly created position of Advocacy Services Coordinator with Melbourne Health (Royal Melbourne Hospital). This new role will include liaison with general practice.

Michael extends thanks to the board, management and staff of ADGP and the many colleagues in the network and general practice who have made his three years with ADGP a valuable and productive time.

■ Positions vacant

Communications Coordinator

ADGP is seeking the services of a Communications Coordinator, responsible for coordinating all aspects of ADGP's national communications program.

The successful applicant will have experience in media/communications, with excellent written and oral communication skills, will be a highly organised self-starter, and will be keen to work as part of a dynamic team. An understanding of primary health policy is desirable.

Applications for the full-time Canberra-based position close Friday, November 12, 2004. Details are available on the ADGP website under 'About ADGP', [Positions Vacant](#)

Accountant

ADGP requires the services of a part-time accountant to assist the Financial Controller to manage the day-to-day operations of ADGP finance team.

The 0.6 FTE position, based in Canberra, will require a demonstrated ability in financial management and administration, expertise in the use of financial systems and desktop applications, an ability to plan, prioritise and monitor workflows to meet deadlines, and well-developed research and analytical skills, particularly in relation to financial data and information.

Further information is available on the ADGP website at [Positions Vacant](#) or by contacting ADGP Financial Controller Phil McCorckell on 02 6228 0813.

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