

**ADGP News is
published by:**

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](mailto:adgpreception@adgp.com.au)

ADGP Board Members:

Chair
Chair, Finance and Audit Sub-Committee
Chair, Rural Sub-Committee
Chair, Governance Sub-Committee

Dr Robert Walters (Tasmania)
Dr Chris Pearce (Victoria)
Dr Michael Taylor (South Australia)
Dr Ken Conolly (Queensland)

Dr Tony Hobbs (New South Wales)
Dr Jennifer Thomson (ACT)
Dr Hilary Fine (WA)

Dr Penny Roberts-Thomson (Northern Territory)
Mr Russell McGowan (Non-GP Director)

ADGP CEO: Kate Carnell

Deputy CEO: Liesel Wett

In this Issue:

(Click on the following links to go directly to the article of your choice.)

- [CEO's Report](#)
- [MedicarePlus Overseas Trained Doctor initiative](#)
- [Immunisation News](#)
- [Nursing News](#)
- [Exploring research links with Divisions](#)
- [Division name changes](#)
- [Conferences and Courses](#)
- [Useful information from beyond the Network](#)
- [Positions vacant](#)

■ CEO's Report from Kate Carnell

Federal election commitments

ADGP has prepared a précis of the 2004 election commitments relevant to Divisions of General Practice. As well as the major Medicare-related measures, these commitments span other health issues such as mental health, cancer control and dementia, as well as family and community services, women's, and regional services portfolios.

Divisions, with their key role in improving health outcomes and integrating general practice with specialist and community services, could play a key role in the implementation of many of these measures. While many of these represent areas that may not have traditionally been seen as 'core business' for divisions, they do accord with the priorities and directions set for primary health care in the Australian Government's response to the Review of Divisions, such as a greater focus on prevention and early intervention.

Most importantly, they represent opportunities for exploring how the network and the unique infrastructure it represents might play a role in advancing current Australian Government health and social policy priorities via programs that are administered in portfolios other than health.

Over the next few weeks, ADGP will be preparing a detailed federal budget submission outlining in some detail recommendations for how divisions and general practice can be involved in implementing these measures. Network input to the submission will be sought.

The document can be found on the ADGP web site at:

<http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?PageMode=indiv&module=NEWS&page_id=3765>.

Promoting divisions

With the new federal parliament now underway, I have written to all federal parliamentarians promoting the work of the divisions network and including a copy of ADGP's latest annual report.

I look forward to a positive working relationship with our parliamentary representatives throughout this new term.

The Review Implementation Committee

The Review Implementation Committee (RIC) implementing the Australian Government response to the Review of Divisions has now met three times. Its workplan contains a number of priorities, the most significant of which is the development of a National Performance Framework for the divisions network.

While consultants have been contracted to lead the development of the framework, members of the divisions network including RIC members are also asked to feed directly into the development of the framework. The committee has released an information paper to update the network on progress to date.

Information released to date can be found at www.health.gov.au/pcd/programs/divisions/index.htm. Links can also be found on ADGP's homepage at www.adgp.com.au.

Divisions network representatives are happy to take feedback on the papers and topics being addressed by the RIC. ADGP Chair Dr Rob Walters and I are representatives. Others include Dr Margaret Culpan, Chair North and West Queensland Primary Health Care, Mr Andrew Waters, Executive Officer, Kimberley Division of General Practice, and Mr Bill Newton, Chief Executive Officer, General Practice Divisions Victoria;

We look forward to your input.

General Practice Representative Group

The General Practice Representative Group (GPRG), comprising representatives of the Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP), Australian Medical Association (AMA), the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) met in Canberra last week.

Dr Walters, ADGP Director Dr Michael Taylor, senior policy officer Kerry Ungerer and I attended the meeting, part of which was also attended by Health and Ageing Minister Tony Abbott.

Issues dealt with included the GPRG's commitment to cooperatively develop a **National Primary Health Care Policy**. Mr Abbott said he would welcome a proposal from GPRG that outlines the support and assistance the Department of Health and Ageing could provide to this work.

GPRG emphasised to the Minister the important of involving general practice in the newly announced **Health Taskforce**, to be headed by Mr Andrew Podger, that will look at the interface between State and Commonwealth health services.

GPRG was also advised that the government's new agreement with the **Pharmacy Guild** would not fund pharmacists to provide services that are traditionally within the domain of general practice.

The future structure of **General Practice Education and Training** (GPET) was discussed. GPRG reaffirmed its preference for a fully profession-owned model, whilst acknowledging that the Government is an important stakeholder in general practice education and training.

Other issues raised with the Minister included GPRG members' concerns that the Department of Health has not renewed its contract with the **Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health** (BEACH) project. GPRG expressed its strong support for BEACH as a valuable source of data on Australian general practice that supports quality improvement and evidence based policy development.

GPRG also reiterated support for the recommendations of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on **Immunisation**. GPRG supports implementation of immunisation through Australian general practice.

A full communiqué from the meeting is available on the [ADGP web site](#).

After-hours initiative

As many Divisions would be aware, the Australian Government will be extending the after-hour general practice program as part of its budget election promises.

Round the Clock Medicare will include a number of components:

- increasing the Medicare rebate on after-hours GP services by \$10 by January 1, 2005; and
- Investing in after-hours GP infrastructure.

A full copy of the investment regarding the infrastructure for GP after-hours services can be found on ADGP's website, at [Hot Issues](#), as part of a paper to divisions on the federal election commitments. Information is also available on the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) website under [After Hours Primary Medical Care \(AHPMC\) Program](#)

The implications of this measure for divisions will be significant. ADGP has met with the DoHA team working on this program. They are currently developing a set of guidelines on which Divisions' applications will be based.

The draft guidelines are due by mid December for consultation with the divisions network regarding their applicability and relevance to after-hours programs nationally. ADGP understands that a strong focus on the guidelines will include demonstrated community need.

ADGP will work with the network to assist DoHA to implement this program.

For further information about this initiative, please contact me at kcarnell@adgp.com.au or Liesel Wett lwett@adgp.com.au

Mental health team

Ms Jane Westley, presently the Mental Health Development and Liaison Officer from the SA Divisions of General Practice (SADI), is the successful applicant for the position of MindMatters Plus GP Senior Project Officer.

We hope to welcome Jane to the position early in the New Year, when current project officer Audrey Graviou begins parenting leave.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

■ MedicarePlus Overseas Trained Doctor initiative

The recently-established National Information and Referral Service (NIRS) Steering Committee is working to develop a web-based national information and referral service, **Doctor Connect**, for Overseas Trained Doctors (OTDs).

The **Doctor Connect** service will promote Australia as place to work as a doctor and assist both OTDs (off-shore and on-shore) and their employers to gain easy access to all the relevant information required about the process of becoming or employing an OTD. There is currently no one website that brings all this information together in Australia. The service is not a medical vacancy website.

Work on *Doctor Connect* is expected to go live at the end of 2004, with a launch planned for early 2005.

The NIRS steering committee was established in September 2004 as part of the MedicarePlus Overseas Trained Doctors initiative. Representation on the steering committee includes a number of IT and doctor groups (GPs, OTDs and other specialties), workforce and recruitment agencies, and the Department of Health and Ageing.

For further information about the NIRS or the meeting please contact Rachel Yates at ryates@adgp.com.au or on 02 6228 0815.

■ Immunisation register rules

The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register's (ACIR) national due and overdue rules for children born from January 1, 2004, have been finalised.

They include amended rules around pneumococcal vaccination as discussed at Committee meetings. The rules are available on the [ADGP website](#) and will be made available from the 'Publications & Guidelines' link on the HIC internet site shortly.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

■ Nursing News

The following information comes from the latest ADGP Nursing News newsletter from [Julie Porritt](#), ADGP Principal Advisor for Nursing in General Practice.

Practice Nurse Recruitment and Orientation Kit

The Melbourne Division of General Practice has developed a comprehensive Recruitment & Induction Kit to assist general practices. The Australian Government DoHA, has funded the division to conduct a pilot of the kit through the Victorian divisions. ADGP is participating as a member of the steering committee for the pilot, providing advice and input into the content of the kit.

The DoHA anticipates that following the Victorian pilot and feedback from the steering committee members, the kit will be further developed and enhanced with a view to roll out to all divisions.

RCNA 2nd National General Practice Nurse Conference

Wollongong provided delegates with a mix of wind, rain, beautiful sunshine and blue seas over the two days of the conference, something for everyone - a bit like the conference itself.

This year more than 150 delegates from Australia and overseas attended, and the key themes that emerged were:

- the important role for the nurse in maintaining safety and quality at the practice
- the need to engage consumer input on the expanding role for the general practice nurse
- that general practice nurses must embrace their professional responsibilities by being actively involved in the profession, maintaining standards of practice and abiding by the Code of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct; and
- that educational opportunities for general practice nurses are continuing to be advanced at the tertiary and local level.

Nursing in General Practice: the ultimate general practice team

The Nursing in General Practice program seminar held at this year's national divisions of general practice Forum highlighted a range of successful division programs. These included the integration of GP/PN teams in two different practices, the innovative support programs being provided by divisions to support nursing in general practice and the importance of general practice nurses being aware of their professional standards and maintenance of competence.

Copies of the presentations can be found at: [Thursday Forum Presentations](#) or <http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=3204>

The key findings from the Nursing in General Practice Demonstration Divisions Project – National Workshops were presented at the seminar. It is anticipated that the final report of the key findings will soon be cleared for release by DoHA, and will be made available to divisions.

For further information, contact Julie Porritt at jporritt@adgp.com.au

[BACK TO TOP](#)

■ Exploring research links with divisions

The Primary Health Care Research and Information Service (PHCRIS) and the Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) recently conducted twenty-one interviews as part of a joint research project exploring links between divisions of general practice and the university sector.

The aim of the project is to increase understanding of these links to help strengthen their vitality and effectiveness in the future.

The Effective Links research team would sincerely like to thank all those divisions and universities who participated in the research for their insightful and considered contributions. The time you gave from your busy schedules is greatly appreciated.

Preliminary themes from the analysis were presented at the National PHCRED Research Capacity Building initiative meeting in November.

A final project report will be available early in 2005. For further information about the project, or to register for a copy of the final report, contact: at PCHRIS - Barbara Beacham, Research Associate, Tel: 08 8204 3180, Email: Barbara.Beacham@flinders.edu.au; or at ADGP - Rachel Yates, Senior Policy Advisor, Tel: 02 6228 0815, Email: ryates@adgp.com.au

[BACK TO TOP](#)

■ Division name changes

South Australia's **Mid North Division of General Practice** has changed its name to Mid North Division of Rural Medicine, to reflect and promote the services provided by rural medical practice.

The new web address for the division is www.mndrm.org.au and the generic email address is mndrm@mndrm.org.au

The **Peel South West Division of General Practice** in Mandurah, south west Western Australia, has now changed its trading name to GP down south. The new email address for Chief Executive Officer Nick Francis is ceo@gpdownsouth.com.au

■ Conferences and Courses

National Health Information Summit

The National Health Information Summit, to be held from December 6-7 in Melbourne, will look at how information management and information and communications technology can transform health care in Australia.

Highlights of the Summit program are speakers from around Australia and overseas who represent a comprehensive range of expertise and experience; a hypothetical moderated by Dr Norman Swan; demonstrations by HealthInsite and HealthConnect; and the launch of the new Electronic Decision Support Evaluation Framework.

To register for the Summit please visit the Summit website at <http://www.ahic.org.au/2004summit>.

8th National Rural Health Conference

There is one month to go for Early Bird registrations for the 8th National Rural Health Conference, to be held in Alice Springs from March 10-13, 2005.

Twenty keynote speakers from Australia and overseas will deal with the health impacts of land and educational policies, Indigenous issues, inter-professional education, changes in clinical practice, and alcohol and drugs.

Your link to the on-line registration site is at www.ruralhealth.org.au. For further information, go to: conference@ruralhealth.org.au

2nd International Conference on Healthy Ageing and Longevity

World leading researchers on ageing will be involved in the 2nd International Conference on Healthy Ageing and Longevity to take place at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre from March 18-20, 2005.

More than 50 speakers will provide leading edge, evidence-based knowledge on the achievement of increased human longevity and healthy/disability free life expectancy. RACGP CPD points will be provided (2 points/hour), as well as CPE and CME points.

For further information or to register for attendance at the 2nd International Conference on Healthy Ageing and Longevity visit the website: www.longevity-international.com or phone 1300 553 275.

2005 Vital Links forum - Call for Oral and Poster Abstracts

The 2005 Vital Links forum will include the Alliance of NSW Divisions 7th Annual State Forum in conjunction with GPCE Sydney on May 20-21, 2005.

Organisers are now calling for oral and poster abstracts for the forum which will cover the following key themes: access and equity, practice support, the role of divisions in the wider health system, population health, and quality in health. Abstracts, due February 11, 2005, can be submitted by filling out the form at.

<http://www.reedsurveys.com/Surveys/Survey.aspx?SurveyID=b40e2a00-6216-4bd9-a5e3-4f6a4e29fd8e&routing=true&preview=true>

Sexual impotence research

The 10th Biennial Meeting of the Asia Pacific Society for Sexual and Impotence Research will be held from October 5-8, 2005, at the Cairns Convention Centre, North Queensland.

More details about the 'Sexual Dysfunction: Old Problems - New Solutions' convention are available at www.promaco.com.au/conference/2005/apssir

[BACK TO TOP](#)

■ Useful Information from Beyond the Network

General Practice Education and Training – registrars survey

The 2004 national survey of registrars in Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) has been completed and the results are available on the General Practice Education and Training (GPET) website at www.agpt.com.au.

The survey found high levels of overall satisfaction among AGPT registrars in relation to the quality of training and with the regional training providers. GPET CEO Dr Bill Coote said that where there was room for improvement, GPET would convene specific working groups to address issues raised by registrars.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

General Practice Communications Research

The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) has commissioned research into the most effective ways of communicating information to general practitioners and others working in the general practice environment.

The qualitative and quantitative research, conducted by Newton Wayman Chong & Associates Pty Ltd (NWC), follows concerns expressed by GPs during consultations by the GP Red Tape Taskforce.

The research will be used to create a more integrated best-practice approach for future government communications. The qualitative fieldwork for this research will begin this year, with the quantitative fieldwork to be done in March next year.

Quality improvement program for rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and osteoporosis

The Australian Government's Quality Improvement Program, which aims to fund work that engages consortia to improve care in one or more of the priority areas of the national action plan for arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions, is calling for expressions of interest to undertake promotional projects.

The priority areas that expressions of interest are invited under are:

- Promoting healthy lifestyles and self-management to optimise health outcomes for rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and osteoporosis;
- Promoting best practice for the optimal management of rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, and osteoporosis;
- Promoting early and optimal management of rheumatoid arthritis to minimise joint damage;
- Promoting appropriate post fracture assessment to minimise further osteoporotic fractures; and
- Promoting timely joint replacement for rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis.

Applicants will need to use the guidelines and first stage application form for expressions of interest provided at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/Publishing.nsf/Content/Listing+of+Tenders+and+Grants-1>.

Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full application using the second stage application form which will be provided to shortlisted applicants. Projects are anticipated to begin in June 2005 and conclude in June 2006.

Information is available from Ms Isolde Kauffman on 02 6289 5887. Closing date for expressions of interest is Tuesday, November 23, 2004.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

■ Positions vacant

ACT After Hours Primary Medical Care Service - GP Medical Director

Applications are sought from suitably qualified general practitioners to act as a medical director (part time) to the newly established ACT After Hours Primary Medical Care Service.

Closing date for applications is December 10, 2004. Telephone enquires should be directed to Dr Ian Brown, Secretary, Canberra After Hours Locum Medical Service on 02 6290 0900. Selection criteria and duty statement is available from Mr Graeme Sellar, Business Manger, Canberra After Hours Locum Medical Service at g.sellar@actdgp.asn.au.

Divisions Development and Support Coordinator

The Queensland Divisions of General Practice Association Incorporated (QDGP) seeks applications from motivated, highly skilled and experienced program coordinators for the position of Divisions Development and Support Coordinator.

The position is a parental leave contract to June 30, 2005, with possible extension. The coordinator will work as a member of the Division Support Team to coordinate the overall provision of support to Queensland Divisions across a range of primary health care portfolios.

An application package including the position description and selection criteria can be obtained by contacting Purveen Meher-Homji on 07 3105 8300 or email gdgp@qdgp.org.au. Applications close on Monday, December 6, 2004. It is anticipated that this position will commence January 24, 2005.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Information in this newsletter is for the use and benefit of all members of SBOs and Divisions, so please pass it on, and recycle the whole, or parts, of this publication to your members with due acknowledgement to ADGP. If SBOs, Divisions and other readers have information for, or comments on, ADGP News please contact Helen Beringen on 02 6228 0853 (Monday and Tuesday) or e-mail hberingen@adgp.com.au

If you wish to be added or removed from the ADGP News distribution list, please let us know via e-mail to hberingen@adgp.com.au.