

Wednesday, 27 April, 2005

## Network collaboration ensures GPs won't miss out

The Western Sydney Division of General Practice ceased trading on Thursday, 21 April 2005, but GPs will not lose the support and services they count on thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Divisions network.

The Alliance of New South Wales Divisions (ANSWD) and the national peak agency, the Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP), are working cooperatively to guarantee the continuation of programs and services which support GPs in their crucial role at the forefront of primary health care.

ADGP has negotiated funding with the Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Ageing to ensure a large number of the ex-Western Sydney Division staff are employed on short-term contracts to provide ongoing support to GPs in the area, based on previously identified GP programs of need.

The arrangement means the experience and skills of former WSDGP staff will not be wasted. In particular, the collaboration is fortunate to have secured the services of experienced CEOs, such as Sally Maspero (soon to finish with the Northern Sydney Division of General Practice) as the interim Manager, and additional GP input from Dr Michael Moore (CEO, Central Sydney DGP).

Kate Carnell, ADGP CEO said, "We are fortunate to have secured the services of the ex-Western Sydney staff that know the region and the GPs and will be able to support them in their daily work. Combined with the skills and experience of Dr Moore and Ms Maspero, this will make a formidable team for the interim," she said.

Dr Ian Adair, ANSWD CEO, said the team was strong, had links with the community, and was as a priority planning to meet with and discuss future arrangements with local GPs.

"We have already started talking with key GPs about their needs, and intend on continuing this consultancy as we participate in future planning for the region. We look forward to being able to inform and to listen to the GPs of the region at their meeting on 4 May 2005."

"We [ANSWD and ADGP] are keen to play an ongoing leadership role as the network works to fill the gap left by Western Sydney Division," he said.

The six divisions of general practice surrounding the previous Western Sydney division - Bankstown, Central Sydney, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Ryde and the Nepean - are joining the collaborative effort by providing interim support, if needed, to local GPs and their patients.

"We are hopeful that under these difficult and unique times a good outcome will be achieved for all involved," Ms Carnell said.

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*The Divisions of General Practice network links 95 per cent of GPs across Australia in a national structure that supports general practice and improves community access to primary care. This network is the key to integrating general practice with other sectors of the health system, both government and non-government, to deliver high quality care to the Australian community.*