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Australian General Practice Network Forum

A reminder to register for this year's Australian General Practice Network Forum to be held in November on the Gold Coast in Queensland!

The theme of the 2006 Forum – *building healthy communities through partnerships* – is reflected in the program through the plenary and concurrent sessions and we have a great line up of speakers both international and local.

Dr David Colin Thome, an expert from the UK in self management will open the plenary session Primary Care Now and Into the Future with a UK perspective. Dr Tony Hobbs, ADGP chair will outline the Australian perspective and the National Primary Care Partnership's vision.

The Forum continues to provide an excellent opportunity for the divisions' network to maximise the impact of their contribution to community health and wellbeing through a program focusing on the future directions of primary health care in supporting general practice, building primary health care teams and strengthening partnerships between GPs, other health professionals, consumers and state health systems.

The concurrent streams will all look at partnerships:

1. The Maturing Network – Promoting our Brand
2. Partnerships through Divisions
3. Partnerships across the life span
4. Partnerships with general practice
5. Partnerships with government.

Rotavirus

Since the publication of the previous Newsletter, the Northern Territory Government has approved the distribution of Rotavirus vaccination for all children. The NT government will spend \$500,000 to ensure that all newborns are vaccinated for the virus. All babies born after August 1 this year will be offered the oral vaccine at the same time as their other routine vaccines due at two and four months.

Rotavirus is the leading cause of severe acute gastroenteritis in infants and young children and in Australia it is estimated that there are approximately 10,000 hospitalisations a year in children less than 5 years old. There are about 115,000 GP visits and 22,000 emergency visits also attributed to rotavirus a year. Two rotavirus vaccines were registered for use in Australia earlier in the year and are available on the private market for around \$240. We are still waiting for the decision regarding funding under the National Immunisation Program although indications are that this decision should be made in early November. More information can be found on the NCIRS website <http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/>

Helen Moore - Principal Advisor – Immunisation, ADG P Ltd

Contact details: ☎ 02 6228 0833 📠 02 6228 0899 ✉ hmoore@adgp.com.au

Information contained within this newsletter is intended to inform you on immunisation issues with a national perspective. As such, it is possible that some references will require adjustment to be made specifically accurate for service providers in each individual State or Territory jurisdiction. For further clarification, contact your SBO Immunisation Coordinator or jurisdiction Health Department.

HPV

The release of the long-awaited HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer and possibly other HPV related cancers has attracted a great deal of attention. Australia has the second lowest incidence rate of cervical cancer and the lowest mortality rate among developed countries due mainly to the effective Pap screening which has been in place for many years. In other parts of the world the cervical cancer mortality and morbidity rates are far higher. The development of this vaccine will save many lives but the continuation of Pap screening is vital. It is imperative that the message to maintain effective screening for women, even after HPV vaccination, is loud and clear for providers and patients. For more information on HPV and the vaccines visit the National Centre for Immunisation web site http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/f-fact_sheets.html

The CSL quadrivalent vaccine Gardasil for protection against Human Papillomavirus (HPV) was launched in August and has been the subject of many workshops and information sessions. The Cervarix bivalent vaccine is due to be available early in the new year. Initially the Gardasil vaccine is available on the private market while we wait for the decision regarding possible public funding for this vaccine. Product information on both vaccines is available on the manufacture's websites - <http://www.csl.com.au/Gardasil.asp>. and <http://www.gsk.com.au>

Varicella Zoster Virus Workshop

A 2-day workshop on the varicella zoster virus will be held in Sydney on the 16-17th November 2006. Prominent international guest speakers include Professor Myron Levin (US), Professor Anne Gershon (US) and Professor Judith Breuer (UK). A host of well-respected local speakers will join them including Professor Margaret Burgess and Associate Professor Alison Kesson. If you are interested in attending look at the NCIRS web site events for information <http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/newsevents/index.html>

National Immunisation Kit

There are still a few copies of the Immunisation Kit are available. Simply email ADGP on the address below. The Kit is designed to be used as a whole or in parts and there is a CD version for those who do not want a hard copy. This resource can be used as a primary source, as an educational tool or parts of it copied as a quick reference. Use it to your advantage.

Pan Flu

The National Pandemic exercise to be held shortly will provide information and answers to questions on Australia's capability with respect to a possible pandemic flu event. Keep up to date by checking the Department of Health Pan Flu site.
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/content/ohp-pandemic-clin-care-gl.htm>

SBOIC Network Meeting

The State Based Organisation Immunisation Coordinators will meeting in October to discuss the proposed whole of Life Register and meet with the consultant engaged by the Department of Health and Ageing to carry out the first phase of the scoping study. This issue will affect all general practices and divisions and therefore needs appropriate input from our sector. If you have comments you would like raised concerning the proposed register, please contact your SBOIC officer at the SBO office in your jurisdiction.

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