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Australian General Practice Network Forum

Online registrations are open for those wanting to take advantage of the early bird special at this year's Australian General Practice Network Forum being held on the spectacular Gold Coast.

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. Jenny Thomson, 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

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. The decision regarding funding under the National Immunisation Program should be released by the end of this month. More information can be found on the NCIRS website <http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/>

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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

After a great deal of publicity and discussion the launch of the CSL quadrivalent vaccine Gardasil for protection against Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is due later this month. It will be available on the private market initially and the decision regarding possible public funding for this vaccine will be made at a later date. There are many sites offering information and comments on the new vaccine which can be accessed through Google. Product information can be found at <http://www.csl.com.au/Gardasil.asp>.

National Division Immunisation Workshop

The National Divisions Immunisation Workshop was held in Sydney on Wednesday 2 August 2006 at Darling Harbour. The attendance of 91 delegates was very pleasing particularly as for most people this meant five days of conference participation as this Workshop followed the PHAA immunisation conference. A social networking evening was held on the Tuesday prior to the Workshop day to allow participants to meet, develop contacts and provide an opportunity to view resources displayed by various Divisions. This evening was sponsored by Wyeth, was well attended and obviously really enjoyed by all those present! It provided a great springboard for the networking discussions that followed the next day.

The theme for the day's event was *Immunisation Across the Whole of Life*. This followed the Federal Government's announcement in the last Budget that they were allocating an amount of money to carry out a scoping study to look at the viability and structure of a possible Whole of Life Register.

The initial speaker, Ian Krebs from the Department of Health and Ageing, introduced the theme and the reality of a register and the scoping study criteria. Dr Rod Pearce spoke on different possibilities of proposal and entertained the audience with the pros and cons of various solutions. The subsequent World Café session was designed to capture the thoughts of individuals on the possibilities of a Whole of Life Register.

Following this discussion, Julie Porritt, Principal Adviser for Nurses in General Practice from ADGP, spoke on issues concerning the training and accreditation of nurses in General Practice particularly with respect to immunisation training. Julie mentioned the amount of money that was handed back recently due to lack of interest in the up take of scholarships. She highlighted the need for Divisions to be aware of scholarships available for training and to take up the offers of monetary support.

Dr Greg Rowles challenged the participants' memories and summarised the critical points from the Public Health Association of Australia Immunisation Conference. He introduced some potential issues for new vaccines and stressed the need to keep General Practice and the supporting Divisions informed and up to date on the new vaccine technology.

On a more practical side, Jasmine Parker, the Immunisation Program Coordinator from the Queensland Divisions of General Practice, presented a scenario of forensic investigation concerning cold chain management. This is an important area that needs constant reinforcement and highlighting to maintain efficiency.

This was followed by a presentation by Mike Brooke from *UltraFeedback* on the information gained in the recent online Divisional Mapping Exercise. Mike summarised the main areas for the participants and indicated how Divisions will be able to view their own data online and compare their results with other Divisions. The collected data will provide a great resource for Divisions to target their strategies to improve the rates and efficiency of immunisation delivery in their areas.

Officers from Medicare Australia offered their expertise and advice throughout the day for Workshop participants. This was greatly appreciated and gave an opportunity for those Divisional officers new to their positions to get information relevant to their situations. Angelique Rosenzweig organised the display and provided answers to a number of questions and shared her expertise and great knowledge of the ACIR and GPII scheme.

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Australia's general practice immunisation newsletter

The presentations given by the various speakers are available on the ADGP web site. <http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm>
See the Hot Issues Recent News for one and others o the Immunisation Program page in the Clearing House.

National Immunisation Kit

Copies of the Immunisation Kit are available for those who would like a copy. Simply email ADGP on the address below. The Kit is designed to be used as a whole or in parts. Use it to help you, your division or your practice. Some are using the resource as a primary source, others as an educational tool. Use it to your advantage.

Pan Flu

The forth coming National Pandemic exercise 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 sites such as the following for the latest information.

<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 met via teleconferences in July and August and of course at the National Divisions Immunisation Workshop in Sydney in early August. The main points for discussion included the new NSW poster campaign and other resources developed by Divisions, Rotavirus funding, HPV vaccine launch and helping Divisions and General Practices with Medicare Australia forms. If you have issues to be raised or information to be shared please contact your SBOIC officer at the SBO office in your jurisdiction.

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