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CEO's Report – From Kate Carnell

Federal Parliament resumes sitting next week for what will be a fascinating "election" year. The polls are suggesting that Labor has closed the gap and it is likely to be a close election. The new Rudd/ Gillard leadership team appears to be getting real traction in the electorate and the new shadow Minister for Health, Nicola Roxon, has hit the ground running. We have already met with her via teleconference and will meet face to face in the next couple of weeks.

This makes it more important than ever that we all implement the Communication and Advocacy Strategy. By now, all Divisions should have started the process of going to see local Federal members and other candidates from major parties.

The Strategy gives you information on how to go about this and the approach you should take. Remember, we want all current and potential Federal Members to know about the great work Divisions do "delivering local health solutions through general practice". We particularly want YOUR local member to know about your Division and some of the local projects that are improving health outcomes for the community.

There is no doubt that the Network's momentum is steadily growing in the political and media sphere – keep up the good work!

The Australian General Practice Network has already made significant progress this year in a number of areas such as community engagement and mental health.

Engaging Effectively with Communities

Network members would be aware that AGPN in collaboration with SBOs has received funding from DoHA to implement a new training program for Network members. This program, "Engaging Effectively with Communities" has been developed based on the increased recognition of the benefits of consumer and community participation in our health care system. There is also increased evidence effective community engagement produces better outcomes. The program will be developed based on an internationally acknowledged professional development training and skills enhancement program. The Steering Committee, consisting of divisional members has

AGPN Board Members

Chair:	Dr Tony Hobbs
Chair, Finance and Audit Sub-Committee: ..	Dr Michael Taylor
Chair, IM Committee:	Dr Chris Pearce
Chair, Rural Sub-Committee:	Dr Ken Connolly
Chair, Governance Sub-Committee:	Dr Emil Djakic
Chair, Forum Steering Committee:	Dr Hilary Fine
Dr Karen Flegg • Dr Karen Stringer • Mr Russell McGowan	

been hard at work, ensuring the program is relevant to the work of Divisions. The program will be the basis of a national training program, with support materials collected and adapted from the Network.

The implementation of the training program is currently in pilot phase, with programs implemented in Queensland, and a second series to be run in Victoria. Once evaluated, the program will be rolled out via SBOs nationally.

In the coming months (March to June 2007) AGPN will be working with SBOs to ensure the training program is scheduled into their Divisional support programs and calendar of events. We hope to be able to bring you further updates on this program in the coming months

AGPN continues to be actively involved in headspace: the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. There are several planning meetings scheduled over the next two weeks to finalise program arrangements and the range of supports and resources the Communities of Youth Services' will be able to take advantage of. We have Jill Morrison, a child and adolescent psychologist, on staff to develop the education and training strategy in consultation with our partner organisation, the APS. The training strategy will provide skills training in youth mental health, but most importantly it will also support a quality training effort through additional activities such as instruction in collaborative team-working and in training leadership, as well as a mentorship program for CYS trainers.

Many Divisions have participated in round 1 of the Youth Service Development Fund which provide support for around 12 CYS initially as well as a number of small grants to consortia or organisations who wish to scope a proposal for round 2. Announcements of successful bids are expected shortly. Following the announcements, Jill will be in touch with selected CYS to begin to canvass training needs and opportunities for roll-out as soon as possible.

I look forward to updating you further on these and other initiatives AGPN are working on.

Kate

Media Snapshot

Media Coverage (Mainstream)

30/01/07- ABC Radio National Health Matters program (15 mins) Kate Carnell **Access Card**

30/01/07- ABC Adelaide (The Bulletin's section-Tony Wright) **Health checks**

17/01/07- Sydney Morning Herald Kate Carnell **AIHW report (practice nursing)**

Media releases

Labor's health checks for school kids gets a big tick 29/1/07

Labor's plan to produce a health checklist for children starting school has been welcomed in principle by Australia's peak body representing general practice, the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN).

Government health spend saving Aussie lives 19/1/07

State and Federal Government spending on public health activities during 2004-05 released in an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report has today been commended by Australia's peak body representing

general practice, the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN).

Practice nurses play key role as challenges face GPs 17/1/07

A report released today that analyses data for the first time on the roles played by nurses in general practice has been welcomed by Australia's peak body representing general practice, the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN).

Handy communication tip

Once you have sent out a press release always make sure the person whose contact mobile phone number is on the bottom of the release is available to set-up or have media interviews both during business and after hours.

Good news from around the Network

There has been more brilliant coverage across Australia from the immunisation press release sent to Divisions late last year.

The *Ballarat Courier* received the localised press release and visited the Ballarat and District Division of General Practice, taking a photograph of Chair Dr Mark Churcher which appeared with the story.

On page 2 of the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* a photograph featured Chair of the Wide Bay Division of General Practice Dr Riitta Partanen with her daughter, highlighting the importance of immunisation.

The ACT Division of General Practice received media hits in two newspapers and on a number of local radio stations, including an interview with CEO Richard Bialkowski on talkback during the high rating 'drive program'.

As a result of this excellent coverage Richard was asked to be a spokesperson at a Medicare Australia media event reminding parents in the ACT their children had to be immunised before they go to primary school and how to access the Childhood Immunisation Register. WIN TV Canberra took great interest in this story.

If your Division has received media coverage we'd love to know about it. Please email Kathryn at kconroy@agpn.com.au

Articles and releases for the Network.

The next article and media release templates will be emailed out to the Network on February 21. We are still finalising the exact topic however it will most likely relate to women's health. This will be confirmed shortly.

Clearing House

A number of new documents have been uploaded to the clearing house including survey examples under Organisation and management – division surveys. Information has also been added under the following categories:

- Aged Care – Information Management, Technology and Communications
- Aged Care – MBS & EPC
- Aged Care – Patient resources

- Information Management – IM Project and resources
- Mental Health – MBS and EPC Templates.

There is some very valuable information on the clearing house now so please take the time to have a look, add more resources and make the best use of the information.

News from Programs

Rural Palliative Care Program (RPCP)

The Rural Palliative Care group of Divisions has launched into the next phase of the program. Eight Divisions around the country are involved in preparing a Resource Kit on palliative care in rural and remote Australia. The idea is that the kit will be available through the AGPN website so that the tools are available to assist in improving the care of dying people – particularly in country areas.

The Department of Health and Ageing has provided financial support for the program and has been keen to see links with palliative care partners such as Palliative Care Australia, Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program, Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach, the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration and the Australian Palliative Care Knowledge Network.

In addition to any new material, the challenge will be to collate all the resources produced during the 2003-2006 RPCP.

South Queensland Rural Division of General Practice is taking a coordinating role in partnership with AGPN. Linda Rudorfer will bring considerable experience in the area to ensure that the outcomes of the program are useful and transferable to Divisions that have not previously had palliative care programs operating in their area.

Other Divisions are making contributions that dovetail to provide a sensible and useful resource package.

The Mid North Coast Division of General Practice will be working on evaluation and education as well as program expertise in aged care and multi-disciplinary teams. In North Tasmania the project will include the involvement of the Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program (MSOAP) palliative care specialist with a focus on documenting their communication strategy.

Developing a manual on the use of an End of Life Clinical pathway in Aged Care settings will be the task of the Division in South East NSW. Working with the General Practice Divisions Victoria, the West Victorian Division of General Practice will examine and map each state's structure in managing, delivering and supporting palliative care services.

The Murrumbidgee, Eastern Goldfields and Adelaide Hills Divisions are also working to ensure that the Resource will be as broad as possible and useful to any GP or Division looking to improve palliative care in a rural setting. They are looking at issues such as link nursing, sustainability and electronic and patient held records.

These rural Divisions are working with AGPN to have the resource available before the middle of this year.

Gardasil role out in 2007

Following the positive determination by the PBAC in November 2006, the human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine Gardasil will be provided free of charge to girls and women between the ages of 12 and 26 years of age.

This is a prophylactic vaccine and will not treat existing HPV infections.

As yet there is no data demonstrating that Gardasil is effective in preventing HPV infections in males. Nor is there evidence that supports the vaccine's efficacy or safety in women over 26 years of age. If these women or men would like to have the vaccine, they can always have it provided privately and pay for it.

The role out of the state health run school based program to vaccinate the younger girls should be able to be introduced from April this year. The second phase of the role out will involve general practices providing vaccine to those women between 18 and 26 and those who miss out on completing their course of 3 injections at school. This should be available from mid year.

AGPN is very involved in this role out. The Principal Adviser for Immunisation has organised a training and support "road show" to visit as many divisions as possible in a very short time frame. The political decision to role out a funded vaccine in the first part of this year has put pressure on to make sure that all divisions and practices are up to speed with the vaccine information, the procedures and the timeframes.

The Principal Adviser for Immunisation will be visiting all SBO immunisation coordinators and addressing network meetings where possible. She will also be visiting and talking to the immunisation officer in each division.

Coordinating with the state health immunisation officers to complement the school based programs and make sure that our general practices are ready for the start of the GP program.

PA-I has been interacting with the pharmaceutical company (CSL) to ensure that the product information and educational material is accessible and readable in the context of a busy practice.

AGPN is developing material to help divisions with their task of training and supporting the practices.

The main aim is to emphasise the need for practices to follow the procedures and ensure that there is no leakage with this vaccine. **This is a very expensive vaccine and must not be leaked to those who are not in the subsidised group**

Handy Websites for reference

http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/hpv_jan_2007.pdf

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/4754B33584405E06CA2572220008CFA8/\\$File/Gardasilfunding-factsheet.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/4754B33584405E06CA2572220008CFA8/$File/Gardasilfunding-factsheet.pdf)

Credentialing of Mental Health Nurses

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses is getting ready for the launch of the Australian Government funding for mental health nursing services under the COAG *New Funding For Mental Health Nurses* Initiative.

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) has welcomed the commitment of all governments in Australia to reforming the mental health system. One strategy the Australian Government is funding to improve the situation for people with severe mental illnesses is the COAG *New Funding for Mental Health Nurses* initiative. Over five years, \$191.6 million will be provided to assist general practices, private psychiatrist services and other community providers to use clinical mental health nursing services. The nurses providing the services will be credentialed by the ACMHN through its Credential for Practice Program.

Being a credentialed mental health nurse indicates that the specialist mental health nursing standard set by the ACMHN has been demonstrated. The underlying purposes are quality practice services, public protection, and professional accountability. This is a rigorous peer review process and credentialed mental health nurses are committed to the profession and to maintaining cutting edge practice for the benefit of the community. The Australian Government specified in 2005 that mental health nurses must be credentialed by the ACMHN to be eligible to provide allied health Medicare services.

A number of mental health nurses already work in collaborative arrangements with medical practitioners to support people in the community. Services they provide include counselling, cognitive behaviour therapy, and education across a range of clients. Throughout 2006 the College has participated in consultation with RANZCP, RANZCGP, APS, AGPN, and DOHA, to develop the new role for nurses under the COAG initiative. In addition, the ACMHN has secured funding from the Australian Government for a project that will enable the College to enhance and expand its Credential for Practice Program.

The College commenced credentialing for its members in 2004 after extensive trials were conducted. The project is an important step as it is clearly associated with the ACMHN mission to pursue excellence in mental health nursing. It is also an important step for the well being of people with mental health disorders.

For more information and applications for the Credential for Practice Program visit the ACMHN online at www.anzcmhn.org . Contact Marilyn Gendek, Project Officer (marilyn.gendek@anzcmhn.org) or Kim Ryan, Executive Officer (executive@anzcmhn.org)

Useful information from beyond the Network

National Primary Care Collaboratives Program

There have been a number of board and staff changes and some exciting new developments at the NPCC. Professor Lindon Wing has assumed the role as chair, Professor Richard Reed has joined the board and Senior Program Manager Colin Frick will soon depart being replaced by Judy Myers. There will be an opportunity to meet Judy at the Wave 3 Learning Workshop on 2&3 February at the Grand Hyatt Melbourne.

A six month extension to existing arrangements with the Commonwealth is currently being negotiated taking the completion date for the current program to 31 December 2007. If successful the extension will enable the 3rd wave of the Program to run over the same length period as Waves 1 and 2 and the Spread and Virtual Collaborative Events to be extended and consolidated.

Medicare Audit of Chronic Disease Management items

As previously indicated, Medicare Australia plans to conduct an Australia-wide audit of Chronic Disease Management (CDM) care planning in early 2007 as part of its ongoing audit program. Anyone wishing to review the CDM items checklist should go to Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing website (www.health.gov.au) and, following the 'A-Z index', look up 'Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Medicare Items (new from 1 July 2005)'. Alternatively, you can try the direct link www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/pcd-programs-epc-chronicdisease and go to point '6. Checklist to help GPs assess whether their CDM plans meet MBS requirements'.

The checklist provides easy-to-use general guidance on the formal MBS requirements which GPs must meet when using the CDM items.

Medicare Australia also plans to write separately to GPs involved in the CDM care planning audit over the coming weeks as the audit progresses.

Medicare Australia Centrelink Medical Forms Helpline

Medicare Australia will expand the services available on the Provider Enquiry line.

People who are carers or people who have a disability, and who claim or receive a payment from Centrelink may also need to provide a medical certificate or treating doctor's report.

Many of these forms can only be completed by a medical practitioner. Practitioners are providing an essential service to their patients when they fill in these forms because they are required to support new claims and reviews for disability and carer payments.

From 1 February 2007, callers seeking help to complete these forms can select option two on the Provider Enquiry line – 13 21 50.

Case studies on men's health – ALM for GPs

Andrology Australia presents the first of 4 online case studies involving GP management of the reproductive health of the younger male. Each online case study has been fully accredited for ACRRM/RACGP points, and the four case studies together comprise an Active Learning Module which attracts 30 Category 1 RACGP points.

Topics covered in the first case include male physical examination, androgen deficiency and Klinefelter's syndrome. Topics covered in subsequent cases include male infertility, testicular cancer, prostatitis and premature ejaculation.

Upon completion of the ALM, GPs will receive an **Andrology Australia orchidometer** (a tool used to measure testis size) for their practice and free registration to the quarterly newsletter *the Healthy Male*.

The ALM is a key initiative for Andrology Australia and developed in conjunction with the Department of General Practice, Monash University and by Genesis Ed. All were co-written with input from affiliated specialists and a national GP reference group.

The first case study is online now, visit the health professional section at www.andrologyaustralia.org

Highest intake in GPET Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program in eight years

GPET has announced its highest intake in trainees into the Australian General Practice Training program in eight years. The increased intake has been attributed to the focused recruitment strategies of the GPET, regional training providers and professional associations and colleges.

The 2007 program will see 619 trainees:

246 GP registrars for the rural training pathway

373 registrars in the general training pathway

AGPN congratulate the new trainees on their acceptance and hope they will be rewarded by this new challenge.

Positions vacant

Operations Manager

Do you have experience in implementing and managing change?

Are you a strategic thinker with high interpersonal skills?

The NE Victorian Division of General Practice Ltd (the Division) is seeking the services of an organized person with a strong management background to work in our Benalla Office to continue the foundation work undertaken in a recent Division restructure.

The successful applicant will report and be accountable directly to the Chief Executive Officer and be responsible for the delivery of programs and services consistent with the Divisions strategic direction. Providing leadership and direction to Program Managers in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of programs and activities is also a key responsibility of this position.

This position requires you to:

- Oversee Division programs to ensure a cohesive delivery of services and programs to the membership.
- Ensure compliance with the Division annual plan and strategic directions.
- Assist the Divisions Primary Care Forum to achieve its purpose.
- Ensure an evidence based approach to planning and evaluation for program delivery and service.
- Represent the Division on a range of external committees and groups.
- Deputise for the CEO in his/her absence.
- Ensure that timely and accurate reports are prepared for the Board, CEO and all funding bodies.
- Forge relationships with other key players in the primary care sector within the region.
- Be involved in a team approach that is committed to provide quality support to rural general practice.

People who believe they fit this description are encouraged to obtain a full position description and key selection criteria by contacting Mrs. Heather Stones on 03 5754 1226 or heathers@nevicdgp.org.au. Applications that do not cover the key selection criteria may be excluded from consideration.

This is a full time position and an attractive annual salary package in the vicinity of \$70,000 awaits the right person plus the advantage of salary packaging.

Applications addressing the key selection criteria should be forwarded to the undersigned by close of business on Friday 16th February 2007. Mr. David Dart, Chief Executive Officer, P. O. Box 500, Mount Beauty, Victoria 3699.

Conferences and courses

PHC RIS Announcement

2007 GP & PHC Research Conference - "Working together"

May 23 - 25, Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour

Reminder - Call for Abstracts - Closing date - Monday 5th February, 2007.

For all of you who have been thinking about submitting an abstract over the Christmas break and are interested in doing so for this year's GP & PHC Research Conference – NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT!!

There are less than three weeks remaining until submissions close!! Don't leave it too late – ACT NOW!!

We welcome all abstract submissions that address the 2007 conference theme, "Working together"! For guidelines on how to submit an Abstract visit www.phcris.org.au/conference/2007/abstracts.php

For further information regarding the 2007 GP & PHC Research Conference see www.phcris.org.au/conference/2007/

Please feel free to pass this information onto any or all interested colleagues.

Postgraduate Certificate of Clinical Education

Opportunity for everyone involved in the clinical teaching of medical and health professions students to enhance their knowledge and skills of clinical education. This certificate has run from 2006 and may be taken in one year or two years of study. There are 4 subjects: two core and two elective. Further details are at: <http://www.jcu.edu.au/courses/handbooks/2007>

Core:

HS5405:03 – Introduction to health professional education

HS5406:03 – Clinical teaching in the health professions

Electives: Two from

NS5407:03 – Contemporary issues in nurse education (Existing Subject)

NS5408:03 – Implementation of clinical teaching strategies (Existing Subject)

HS5409:03 – Learning & Teaching about the Consultation (new in 2006)

HS5410:03 – Professional Practice in Education (new in 2006)

For further information contact:

A/Prof Tarun Sen Gupta on 4781 6222

Tarun.Sengupta@jcu.edu.au

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Contact the editor

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 AGPN.

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