

Exciting News from the Federal Budget for General Practice Nurses- enrol in University of Melbourne Practice Nurse Education

The University of Melbourne, Department of General Practice has invested in practice nurses by developing the Certificate/Diploma of Primary Care Nursing delivered by distance education.

The Federal Budget announcement around investing in Primary Care Nursing is welcome. Every GP can now get a substantial subsidy of \$25,000 to employ a nurse in general practice. We encourage nurses to enrol in the Certificate or Diploma of Primary Care Nursing course to enable them to expand their scope of practice.

It has been developed by experienced practice nurses and general practitioners to suit the needs of busy practice nurses in areas (chronic disease management, quality systems and risk management, health promotion, women's health, mental health and youth health) that will complement previous experience.

Further details: www.gp.unimelb.edu.au or call Ms Bernie Cooper, course administrator on 03 8344 7275. We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Medicare Benefits Schedule — removal of practice accreditation requirements for General Practice Focussed Psychological Strategies services

The Government will change the rules governing eligibility to provide Medicare-subsidised Focussed Psychological Strategies (FPS) services. FPS services include cognitive therapy, workshops to improve patients' communication skills and stress management techniques.

Currently, only doctors who work in practices that are accredited by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) can provide these services. From 1 July 2010, doctors will be able to provide Medicare-subsidised FPS services even if they do not work in practices accredited by the RACGP. This is expected to increase the total number of FPS services being provided to Australians with a mental illness.

This measure will provide savings of \$1.9 million over four years, as FPS services are less likely to result in the prescribing of pharmaceuticals to the patient. FPS services also have lower Medicare safety net flow-on costs as they have higher levels of bulk billing which results in no out-of-pocket expenses for patients.

ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS IN PROVIDING COORDINATED MENTAL HEALTH CARE PACKAGES

Following the budget last week, the Government has had constructive discussions with the Australian Association of Social Workers and Occupational Therapy Australia on how to best introduce coordinated mental health care packages for people with severe mental illness in primary care and better use of fee-for-service Medicare items.

The Government is currently evaluating the provision of the mental health services through the Medicare Benefits Schedule under the *Better Access* program.

To ensure that future *Better Access* reforms are informed by the evaluation, and the detailed design of care packages can be developed in consultation with professional groups, the Government will defer the introduction of the care packages and any associated changes to fee-for-service Medicare arrangements until **1 April 2011**.

Until then, current arrangements will remain in place.

Developments in Gastrointestinal Therapies

GPs are invited to an educational program focusing on the the latest developments in gastrointestinal therapies.

The program has been developed in collaboration with an educational advisory committee of a leading Australian Gastroenterologist, Cardiologist and General Practitioner, each of whom have a particular interest in Gastrointestinal Health.

The interactive program has been developed to give you the opportunity to

- Gain practical advice on assessing and treating your patients with GORD, including links with Barrett's oesophagus
- Become aware of the latest data and relevant guidelines on managing GORD
- Review a typical case with a local expert
- Share your ideas and experience with colleagues

Program details:

Location: The Sebel, 1 Marco Polo Drive, Mandurah WA

Date: Tuesday 25th May 2010

Time: 6.30pm Registration, 6.45 – 9.15pm

To register or for further information please call Marion Macgregor on 0409 118 726



ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL LIAISON GP Dr Jacquie Garton-Smith

Phone 9224 2283 or 0418 900 569, fax 9224 1939 or e- mail Jacquie.Garton-Smith@health.wa.gov.au

ROUTINE Gastroenterology Open Access Procedures

The Gastroenterology Department at RPH is keen to let GPs know that waiting lists for **routine** Open Access procedures at RPH have significantly increased to approximately 10 months for gastroscopy and 14 months for colonoscopy.

Emergency procedures (eg cancer on CT scan, alarming symptoms or signs and ERCPs) are given priority and can generally be done within a couple of weeks. Please speak directly to the on-call gastro registrar through the RPH switch (9224 2244).

Procedures can often be done more quickly on the Ambulatory Surgery Initiative (ASI) lists - approximately 2 months for gastroscopy and 3-4 months for colonoscopy. RPH will contact suitable patients for their consent and arrange for you to refer them onto Bentley or Swan Districts.

Whilst urgent cases can be done more promptly, there may be a significant wait for patients with undiagnosed malignancy without more alarming features on history.

Please inform your patients of the waiting times on referral and, if suitable, discuss whether they would be willing consider other options eg referral privately or to a secondary hospital.

If you need advice on referrals to RPH, please phone the **Clinical Priority Access Nurse**: Delia Perrett on 9224 3650 OR contact the **on-call Gastro registrar** via 9224 2244 for Gastro referrals to discuss cases that you feel are more urgent

Australian Medical Association
AMA (WA) Dr Camille Michener Legacy Award
Junior Doctor of the Year 2010

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN AND CLOSE AT 4.30PM ON FRIDAY JUNE 11 2010

The Australian Medical Association of Western Australia (AMAWA) Dr Camille Michener Legacy Award has been inaugurated in 2010 to recognise the exceptional contribution of Dr Camille Michener to the Medical Profession, her colleagues and the patients she felt privileged to service. The Award will recognise the Junior Doctor of the Year and ensures that we celebrate the outstanding contributions of our Junior Doctors to the Medical Profession and the Community.

A grant of \$3,000 will be awarded to the Award winner to be used in further Professional development.

For further information on the Award or to obtain a nomination form, please Contact Clare Thomas at the AMA (WA) on 9273 3000, or email clare.thomas@amawa.com.au Nominations can also be completed on line at www.amawa.com.au/CamilleMichenerAward



RADAR

Rational Assessment of Drugs and Research

NPS to fill a gap in the availability of independent information about new medicines and research. From the outset the key aims of *RADAR* have been to provide evidence-based information about new drugs as soon as they become available on the PBS, and to explain the place in therapy of new drugs relative to other medicines and non-drug options. *RADAR* complements other new drugs information from NPS — including *Australian Prescriber's* new drugs comments, published when a new drug is first marketed, and *Medicine Update*, which describes for consumers the place in therapy of medicines newly available on the PBS.

NPS RADAR is researched and written by NPS staff. Topics are selected by a multidisciplinary working group according to their relevance to primary care and the need for information about related quality use of medicines issues. Articles are reviewed by the working group and by a clinical expert in the relevant field. Sponsors are invited to provide NPS with information from their submission to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee and also to provide comment on draft *RADAR* articles.

You may order/subscribe to NPS materials at the following site:
http://www.nps.org.au/health_professionals/order_free_information/order_now

Matt Pettit NPS Facilitator GP down south Busselton
Phone: 0438 945 273
Email: mattp@gpdownsouth.com.au



Cancer Council Group Programs

The Cancer Council WA will commence the Life Now Exercise program in May and June. The program is free for people living with cancer, their carers and family members. For more information about locations and eligibility contact the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20 or go to www.cancerwa.asn.au

The program includes: a personalised program and admission to 2 classes per week, every Monday & Thursday due to start in May and June 2010.

The program requires a 12 week commitment (health permitting).

There is a **Mandurah** course beginning on the 14th June 1.00 - 2.00pm – City of Mandurah Recreation Centre

The program is free to cancer patients who have undergone treatment within the last two years and their carers. (Conditions apply*)