



HEALTH CONSUMER NETWORK

NETWORK NEWS BRIEF - June 2008

WELCOME

Welcome to the June 2008 Network News Brief. Network News Brief is sent out via email approximately 3 or 4 times a year (and in hard copy to those members who request it this way).

NEWS FROM THE DIVISION

Brave New World – May Forum

Over 20 consumer representatives came together to explore consumer perspectives of chronic disease self-management at the May Health Consumers Forum.

The Forum outcomes included a range of strategies and criteria to strengthen self-management intervention in the general practice setting:

Forum outcomes will be used to inform the Division's current business planning process.

NEWS FROM OTHER AREAS

MyTime

Parents and Carers of pre-school children with a disability or chronic medical condition can now come together for a cuppa and a chat with the launch of new support groups earlier this year.

MyTime Support Groups are held in Hobart (1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month 12.30-2.30pm) and Eastern Shore (2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month 12.30-2.30pm).

To find out more, phone Pam Timbs at Association for Children with Disability – ph: 62312466.

Grief & Bereavement Support Group

The support group is open to all people who have lost a husband, wife or partner and meets on the first Friday of the month at the Clarence Plains Community Health Centre 10am – 12pm.

Please phone Colleen Fletcher at the Centre - ph: 62146035

New health privacy info for consumers

Consumers and health care providers can now boost their awareness of health privacy issues with the release of consumer health privacy guidelines.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner has released five information sheets and seven frequently asked questions on issues such as fees for access to health information under the privacy act, disclosure of health information and impaired capacity, and denial of access to health information due to serious threat to life or health.

The information sheets and FAQ's are available from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner website <http://www.privacy.gov.au/publications/index.html#1> and <http://www.privacy.gov.au/faqs/hf/index.html>

Self management for chronic heart conditions

Heart health self-management for consumers has received a boost with the release of two new Heart Foundation resources.

Living well with chronic heart failure is a consumer handbook (with associated fact sheets) offering guidance in self-management of the condition, and *Managing my heart health* is a resource for people with or at high risk of coronary heart disease.

A working group of heart failure experts and representatives of the Heart Foundation, National Institute of Clinical Studies and the National Prescribing Service developed the resources. Plus, the resources were tested among heart failure patients and nurses.

Go to the Heart Foundation website for more info <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au>

New arthritis info sheet collection

Access to quality evidence based health information is a vital factor for people with arthritis to take an active role in self-managing their condition.

Arthritis Australia and the Australian Rheumatology Association have responded to this need with the production of 29 evidence –based information sheets to help consumers make informed decisions about their health care.

The information sheets include topics such as medications, surgery, pain management, exercise, glucosamine, fish oils and complementary therapies.

The sheets are available for download from Arthritis Australia website

www.arthritisaustralia.com.au or you can call Arthritis Tasmania 1800 011 041

Mental Health Practitioner directory

Finding a mental health service and practitioner in your area has now been made easier with a new online directory. The *Beyondblue* directory includes an interactive map to make it easier to find a relevant mental health practitioner.

Go to <http://www.beyondblue.au/index.aspx?linkid=107.1007>

National Prescribing Service (NPS) – latest info

The autumn edition of ***Medicines Talk*** includes articles on reducing spending on medicines and the risks of combining types of medicines.

Medicine and your money

How can you save money buying medicines without compromising your health?

The latest issue of *Medicines Talk* provides tips on reducing spending on medicines with suggestions like having a medicine review, considering generic medicines, asking about different strength medicines and investigating the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Safety Net.

Prescriptions and other medicines

Have you ever considered how taking over-the counter medicine can interact with your prescription medicine?

Active ingredients in over-the counter medicines can interact with active ingredients of any other medicines – vitamin, herbal, natural, over-the-counter or prescription medicine.

Plus, the more medicines you take, the greater the risk of interactions.

The autumn edition of ***Medicines Update*** will also provide valuable information on quality use of medicines with information to consider when you and your doctor discuss a newly released medicine.

OVER TO YOU...

Don't forget that General Practice South is keen to receive comments or questions relating to general practice from members of the Health Consumer Network at any time (you don't have to wait for us to ask specific questions).

If you have any news from your organisation that is likely to be of interest to GPs or their staff, the deadline for the next edition of the *Division News* is July 2 2008. The deadline for the next *Network News Brief* is August 31 2008.

We look forward to hearing from you. If you need to discuss any issues in this newsletter, please contact Stacey van Dongen – Program Officer for the Health Consumers Network – at the Division ph: 62344230 or email svandongen@gpsouth.com.au.