



HEALTH CONSUMER NETWORK

NETWORK NEWS BRIEF – November 2009

WELCOME

Welcome to another Network News Brief. This publication is sent out via email approximately 3 or 4 times a year (and in hard copy to those members who request it this way). It is planned that two Forums will occur each year.

NEWS FROM THE DIVISION

The next Health Consumers Network Forum will be held on **Wednesday, 9 December 2009** in the General Practice South Seminar Room: Ground Floor, 31 Tower Rd, New Town from 9:30am till 11:30am. The topic for discussion will be the **Health Reforms** currently on the Federal Government's agenda. An invitation accompanies this Newsletter.

HEALTH REFORMS

The Prime Minister released the final report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission in late July. The Executive Summary (20 pages) and recommendations (22 pages) are recommended pre-reading for the Forum in December. The full report can be viewed at www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/nhhrc-report

A draft Primary Health Care Strategy was also released in early September. The document can be found at: www.yourhealth.gov.au/internet/yourhealth/publishing.nsf/Content/NPHCS

This draft report is in two parts:

1. a draft National Primary Health Care Strategy (29 pages)
2. the document supporting the Report from the External Reference Group (almost 200 pages)

CONSUMER CONSULTATION ON SUPER CLINICS

On 24 June, a Consumer Network Forum was held on the topic of "What should a Super Clinic look like and how should it operate for community members?" Deb Zwolsman from Dept of Health & Ageing and Siobhan Harpur from Dept of Health & Human Services were guest speakers. The main comments from the Forum centred on the following issues that consumers would like Super Clinics to incorporate:

- Board representation from whole-of-community;
- Hours of operation should meet community need;
- Complaints process should be immediate and appropriate and should guide continuous improvement;
- Portability of patient records;
- Suitable staffing mix, ie, integration of roles and responsibilities;
- Ensure processes occur to measure and review patient health goals, outcomes and satisfaction levels;
- The need to offer a broad range of outpatient services.

This information has been fed into General Practice South's communication with relevant stakeholders. Thank you to those Network members who attended this Forum.

SUPER CLINIC UPDATE

Both the GP Super Clinics in the south of Tasmania are progressing well. Clarence is scheduled to be up and running in mid 2010 and Sorell in the later half of 2010.

What do they promise? We all know that an ageing population is putting pressure on our health services, and especially our hospitals. GP Super Clinics (as well as offering access to GP services) aim to offer additional clinics and services for chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, obesity and hypertension. Improved health

care outcomes for the community should also result from strong integration of GP services and allied health staff under the same roof. All this is aimed at keeping patients healthier and reducing hospital visits for many!

NEWS FROM OTHER AREAS

Quality Use of Pathology Forum in Hobart – 26 November 2009

This workshop seeks to explore consumer views and experiences with pathology and to identify areas of concern, gaps, issues and opportunities for improvement. For more information, contact Emily Reed in Canberra on 02-6273 5444, or email e.reed@chf.org.au. The web link is at www.chf.org.au/pathology-2009-activities.php

Swine Flu vaccination

The national vaccination program to protect against H1N1 Influenza 09 officially started on 30 September with announcements from the Federal Minister for Health, Nicola Roxon. Subsequently there has been an ongoing media campaign involving television, radio and print media advertisements.

Supplies of Panvax® have been distributed to GPs along with other equipment to administer the vaccine. This is a Commonwealth funded vaccine available through general practice. It will not be available for purchase privately.

HPV (Cervical Cancer) Vaccine

The final period for receiving this vaccine in the “catch up program” for girls and women aged 13-26 years ends on December 31.

The HPV vaccination program aims to prevent girls and women getting cervical cancer by protecting them from the HPV virus, which causes most cervical cancers. The vaccine is currently free for 12 and 13 year old girls (through school programs).

The “catch-up program” for 13 to 26 year olds, which has been rolled out through schools and general practice, commenced in 2007. To be eligible for the free vaccine young women must have had their first dose by 30 June 2009 with the final dose to be given by 31 December 2009. After 31 December each dose will cost \$149.50. It is important to ensure that all three doses of the HPV course are received to gain full coverage.

More information is available from GPs about these and other immunisations recommended for your family or phone the Immunise Australia National Infoline on 1800 671 811 or visit the website www.immunise.health.gov.au

Pertussis case numbers still going up

Although the media focus has moved to other areas, the number of Pertussis (whooping cough) cases is still rising. The risk for new born children and young children is still prominent and most state and territory health departments, except Tasmania, have responded with free vaccine for parents and, in some areas, grandparents and carers.

This year's outbreak fuelled a surge in demand for the licensed dTpa vaccines in Australia resulting in a national shortage in the private market. However, both manufacturers now confirm that they have adequate supplies in the country to satisfy the private market.

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 February 2010 edition of the *Division News* is January 8, 2010. If you would like to submit an item for this newsletter, the deadline is February 26, 2010.

We look forward to hearing from you. If you need to discuss any issues in this newsletter, please contact Julie Dunbabin – Program Manager – at the Division, ph: 62 087300 or email jdunbabin@gpsouth.com.au