



HEALTH CONSUMER NETWORK

NETWORK NEWS BRIEF - October 2007

WELCOME

Welcome to the October 2007 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

Health Consumers Forum – Wednesday Dec 5 2007 – Moorilla Estate

Have you ever felt like you have wasted half a day looking for good quality health information on the web?

The last Health Consumers Forum for 2007 will explore what makes a good website and how you can easily navigate through a plethora of web-based health information easily and with confidence.

You will receive an invitation to the forum *On the health information super highway* in mid November. Hope to see you there!

NEWS FROM OTHER AREAS

Aged care consumer friendly website

Making an informed decision about aged care options individually and for family members requires access to good sources of accurate and relevant information with little fuss.

With this need in mind, the Commonwealth Government's Department of Health and Ageing has produced an online user-friendly source of government and non-government information and services.

The consumer focused *Aged Care Australia* website has been designed with information arranged based on five questions to enable easy navigation through a range of aged care information.

Need to know where to start?

Need help staying at home?

Need help with aged care homes?

Need help for carers and family?

Need help with health?

Go to <http://www.agedcareaustralia.gov.au/>

New online service provides info on pathology testing

Consumers can now find information about the tests used to screen, diagnose or monitor illness and disease with the launch of new Internet based service.

The Commonwealth Government funded *Lab Tests Online* can provide up-to-the-minute information about the tests used to diagnose a specific condition, what the relevant tests are looking for, and how they work.

The Australian Association of Clinical Biochemists developed the service with support from the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia.

Go to www.labtestsonline.org.au

New resource will strengthen treatment planning process

A new Commonwealth Government treatment planning resource aims to ensure people with a mental health problem and drug and alcohol problems and their carers are involved in the treatment process.

The *Consumer and Carer Involvement in Comorbidity Treatment Planning Package* was developed to improve treatment outcomes by designing a plan based on the needs of both the consumer and carer.

Launched nationally in September, the CD-Rom format package includes separate 'Planning Together Information Kits' for consumers and carers.

Treatment services will be able to download the documents and add agency-specific information to suit the needs of consumers and carers.

Go to the Department of Health and Ageing website <http://www.health.gov.au>

To order, please include Comorbidity Treatment Planning package (ID78) and email nmm@nationalmailing.com.au

National Prescribing Service (NPS) – latest info ***Generic medicines – clarifying the facts***

The second stage of the NPS national awareness campaign *Get to know your medicines* aims to boost consumer and health professional confidence in the use of generic medicines.

The majority of consumers are aware of generic medicines, and many would consider using a generic prescription medicine in the future but are not confident to do so.

Launched in September, the *Generic medicines are an equal choice* campaign has been developed to increase consumer awareness of what generic medicines are to ensure consumers have confidence in using generic medicines when it is appropriate to do so.

The campaign runs until November and includes television commercials and is supported by a range of campaign resources (including 7 fact sheets), and NPS resources. Go to the NPS website and click on *get to know your medicines* www.nps.org.au

And, for more information support on medicines

Consumers can access independent, accurate and current information on medicines by calling the *NPS Medicines Line*.

Medicines Line gives you confidential information on prescription, generic brand and over the counter medicines plus herbal and natural therapies.

The service is staffed by pharmacists and is available Monday – Friday, 9am – 6pm for the cost of a local call (calls from mobiles might cost more) **1300 888 763**.

Ever thought about buying medicine over the Internet?

The winter edition of NPS consumer publication *MedicinesTalk* investigates how consumers can purchase medicines safely online.

This edition also looks at the management of medicines and health and support issues for people living with osteoarthritis.

Medicines Talk is a free quarterly NPS publication aiming to keep consumers informed about using medicines wisely.

You can view or subscribe to the publication by visiting www.nps.org/consumers or by writing to Reply paid, Medicines Talk, NPS, PO Box Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012.

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 November 7 2007. The deadline for the next *Network News Brief* is January 11 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