

# The Elms Family Medical Centre

## Quarterly Newsletter

*Keeping you in touch with developments at our Medical Centre*

[www.theelms.com.au](http://www.theelms.com.au)



### Summer 2017/2018

We have recently activated the option for patients to make appointments online to see their doctor. Online booking of appointments is only available to patients already registered at The Elms, and are for standard (15 minute) doctor consultations only. For longer (or more specialised) appointments, bookings to see our nurse, or if you are a new patient wanting to register, please speak with our receptionists by phoning 5367-6662.

The online booking system allows appointments to be made up to 2 weeks in advance. If you need to book further ahead, or cannot find an available appointment with your usual doctor, please ring the clinic and we will do our best to accommodate you. As always, in an emergency, please call 000 (triple zero) for an ambulance or attend a hospital emergency department.

Online booking can be completed via our clinic website ([www.theelms.com.au](http://www.theelms.com.au)) or by using The Elms Family Medical Centre application, which is free to download for both Apple and Android devices. Please see our website for details.

### Farewell to Di Sweet

Di Sweet, pathology collector, was one of the longest serving members of the Elms family when she retired recently. Over the years, she has worked under various pathology services including St John of God Pathology, Gribbles Pathology, Healthscope Pathology, and most recently Australian Clinical Labs. Di has also been our resident baker, regularly bringing in home-made scones! She will be missed as a friend as well as a colleague, and we wish her a long and happy retirement.

### Medical student news

Jared Harris, our Deakin University medical student for 2017, has just completed his year-long placement with us. We would like to thank all our patients who have contributed to Jared's learning and for giving him the opportunity to be involved in their care. Jared will now progress to his fourth (and final year) of medical school in 2018 with rotations in various hospital specialties. We wish him every success for his medical career.

### Psychologist news

Ms Stefa Jarema, psychologist, recently commenced private consulting at The Elms. Stefa provides general psychological services to all age groups but has a particular focus on child and adolescent psychology. She has a background in teaching and pharmacology in addition to her psychological qualifications, and her areas of expertise include school avoidance, bullying, self-esteem, exam anxiety, depression, stress management, and sleep issues.

Stefa may be consulted privately (no Medicare rebate although a rebate may apply if you have appropriate private health insurance) or through your doctor under a Mental Health Care Plan (Medicare rebate available). Please discuss your eligibility for the Medicare rebate with your doctor. Working every Wednesday, appointments to see Stefa can be made by phoning 0447-896-893.

## **New National Cervical Cancer Screening Program**

The updated National Cervical Cancer Screening Program begins as of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017. This introduces a new 5-yearly Cervical Screening Test which replaces the old 2-yearly Pap smear. The test is collected in the same manner by your doctor but the specimen is analysed differently, namely through the application of a Human Papilloma Virus detection test. The higher predictive accuracy of this test means that despite being performed every 5 years it is still more reliable than the 2-yearly Pap smear. Cervical screening is recommended for all women aged between 25 and 74 years who have ever been sexually active. Self-collection of specimens is also available for eligible women. For further information about the new Cervical Screening Test, please speak with your doctor.

## **Requests to back-date referrals**

Occasionally we receive requests from patients to back-date a referral after they have already been to see the specialist. The back-dating of referrals is expressly disallowed by Medicare and The Elms Family Medical Centre reserves the right to decline such requests. Referrals are an important means of communication with the specialist, and help with the quality of care provided to patients. One particular situation that can catch patients out is where an indefinite referral has previously been issued by your doctor but the specialist requests a new one. A new referral is also required when seeing the same specialist for a different condition. It is the responsibility of the patient to confirm with their specialist that they have a valid referral prior to their appointment.

## **Patient non-attendance of appointments**

On average, between 5-10% of appointments are lost each week due to patient non-attendance. We want patients to be able to access medical care when they need it so if an appointment is no longer required, giving sufficient notice allows the slot to be freed up for another patient who would have otherwise missed out. We have a system where SMS reminders are sent out to those who have a mobile number listed with the clinic to help reduce missed appointments. The Elms has a policy where repeated failure to keep appointments may result in a fee being charged. This non-attendance fee will apply even if a patient is normally bulk-billed, and further appointments may not be made until payment of this fee.

## **General Practice Management Plans (GPMP)**

Patients with conditions defined as “chronic and complex” may be eligible to participate in a GP Management Plan. In this instance, “chronic” means persisting beyond 6 months, and “complex” means affecting multiple organ systems. In addition to providing a framework to improve treatment coordination, having a 6-monthly GPMP review with your doctor may also allow Medicare rebates to access to up to five visits to an allied health professional per year (this is called a Team Care Arrangement, or TCA). To be eligible for a TCA, the management of the chronic condition must involve your doctor, plus at least two other providers (medical specialists and/or allied health professionals). Please speak with your doctor for further information about this program.

## **The Elms Facebook page**

There are many ways to keep in touch with each other, and a defining method of this generation is social media. Although more traditional means continue to have a place (such as this newsletter), there is a distinct “real-time” advantage of platforms like Facebook. The Elms has its own Facebook page and through it, followers can receive the most up to date information about the clinic. For example, if the phone system is down or the clinic has an urgent announcement, then Facebook is the quickest way to spread the word. There may even be the occasional notification of a lost toy looking for its owner!

Patients can find us at [www.facebook.com/Elmsfamilymedicalcentre](http://www.facebook.com/Elmsfamilymedicalcentre)

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