

The Elms



Family Medical Centre

Quarterly Newsletter

Keeping you in touch with developments at our Medical Centre

www.theelms.com.au



Autumn 2015

The redevelopment of The Village Shopping Centre continues and it won't be long before the completion of the larger western car park. This will bring additional parking spaces for patients closer to the clinic and a new access off Main Street. The Elms will remain in its current location with no plans to move.

Our clinic is about to switch over to the National Broadband Network (NBN) in place of the old copper telephone lines. We hope the transition is seamless, but as with any technology upgrade, there may be unexpected consequences. Updates regarding progress and any "teething problems" will be posted on our Facebook page.

Doctor news

Staff from The Elms recently held a farewell at the Court House Hotel for Dr Nyree O'Connor who will be away for the year whilst completing the Postgraduate Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene through the University of Melbourne. This will entail a clinical placement in Thailand as well as several rural locum relief positions in the Northern Territory and Far North Queensland. We wish Nyree all the best for her studies. Another one of our doctors, Dr Carolyn Sebastian, will also be away. For the next six months, Carol will be in Ararat completing her outer rural general practice rotation, before returning to The Elms in the second half of this year.

Our total full-time doctor numbers, however, remain stable, with the commencement of two advanced general practice registrars, Dr Ummu Rauf and Dr Leon Toh. Prior to coming to The Elms, Ummu completed her twelve months of outer rural placement in Stawell, and has a special interest in women's and children's health. Leon spent a year in outer rural practice in Swan Hill before starting at The Elms and his particular area of interest is minor skin surgery. Both Ummu and Leon will participate in the emergency service at the Bacchus Marsh Hospital and like all the doctors at The Elms can admit and care for patients in Bacchus Marsh Hospital.

Medical student news

We welcome our 2015 Deakin University medical student, Russell Stanbrough, who will be attached to The Elms and Bacchus Marsh Hospital for the entire year. Russell is the fifth Deakin medical student we have mentored and he will be involved in consultations with patients under the supervision of Dr Rob Hosking and Dr Woody Wu. The Elms plays an important role in the training of future doctors and we thank our patients for giving Russell the opportunity to participate in their care as part of his learning. Our student from 2014, Melinda Pattanasri, passed her examinations and is now in her final year of medical school at Deakin University in Geelong.

Receptionist News

Lauren Wright has successfully finished her traineeship with us and has secured a position as a medical receptionist in Ballarat where she now lives. We know that she will be a great asset and wish her well. In her place is new receptionist, Kerry Majewski, who has previously had experience looking after customers in a local retail pharmacy. Kerry has already settled in and joins our team of enthusiastic and friendly receptionists.

New Cardiologist

Specialist cardiologist, Dr John Zhu, commenced consulting at The Elms in February 2015 and provides expert management of many heart conditions including coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, heart failure, irregular heart rhythms and valve problems. He specialises in cardiac interventions such as performing cardiac angiograms, stress tests and the insertion of coronary stents, and received his advanced procedural training in Germany and Australia. Dr Zhu has clinical appointments at Ballarat Base Hospital and the Epworth Hospital in Melbourne, where he performs his procedures.

Dr Zhu consults privately and he visits The Elms once a month on a Wednesday afternoon. A referral from your doctor is required before making an appointment to see him. Please speak with your doctor or our receptionists for further information.

Other Services at The Elms

Just a reminder that along with the new cardiologist, The Elms also has regular services from:

- Our practice nurses for immunisations, dressings, lung function testing, chronic disease care plans, etc.
- Specialist general surgeon, Mr Binh Nguyen.
- Specialist endocrinologist and general physician, Professor Lee Kennedy.
- Podiatry by Medical Footcare Podiatry (Gerard Zammit and Nick Squillari).
- Specialist pregnancy and women's ultrasound by Melbourne Women's Imaging.
- Physiotherapy by 101 Physio (Joseph Louka and Chong Yao).
- Dietitian, Melanie Bouras.
- Diabetes educator (practice nurse, Judy Higgs).
- Psychologists (Louise, Meredith, Laura and Maria).
- Diagnostic pathology by Healthscope Pathology.
- Advanced family planning options such as IUD (intrauterine device) insertion and vasectomies.

For additional information about these services, please speak with our reception staff or your doctor. Alternatively, you can visit the clinic website, www.theelms.com.au

Proposed Government changes to Medicare

Despite the Federal Government dropping its plan to reduce the Medicare rebate received by non-concession patients for seeing their family doctor, it has not changed its intention to freeze the indexation of the rebate for all patients until 2018. This erosion of General Practice funding will not only drive up the cost to patients but also affect the viability of many practices that are already operating on narrow margins. We await further Government announcements but until then, there is **no change in our current billing policy** of continuing to bulk-bill all concession card holders and children under the age of 16 years.

It has been repeatedly established through Australian and international research that quality General Practice is the most cost effective way to maintain the health of communities and to reduce the demand on hospital services. We strongly believe that the Government proposal to limit funding for patients to see their family doctor is likely to make patients delay or even avoid seeking health care, resulting in worse health outcomes in the long run. It could also lead to patients attending emergency departments with non-emergency problems.

The Elms has already written letters to relevant Government Ministers, Shadow Ministers and Senators expressing our opposition to the planned cap on funding. Earlier Government policies such as the \$7 co-payment and the change in definition of a brief appointment were dropped due to widespread condemnation. As a community, we have until 1st July before the cap comes into effect so now is the time to make your voices heard.

“We are proud to be an Accredited General Practice”

