



The Elms Quarterly

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



www.theelms.com.au

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Doctor News

There has not been any change to our current complement of doctors, which is unusual given that The Elms is a practice involved in the post-graduate General Practice Training Program. Typically, registrars on the program have their placements here lasting between six to twelve months, whilst under the mentorship of Dr Rob Hosking and Dr Woody Wu. The continuing valuable members of our medical team are Drs Christopher Maclay, Faiza Khan, Abha Chikarsal, Grace Diao and Manju Nadiger.

Dr Rob Hosking and Dr Woody Wu are both busy with commitments outside of their usual patient consulting. Rob is a Clinical Leader in the National e-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA), as well as being a member of the e-Health Working Group of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. These organisations are tasked with the development of secure individual electronic health records for Australia, allowing more effective health care. Woody is a Director on the Board of the Central Highlands General Practice Network, which is currently involved in the formation of a regional Primary Health Care Organisation (PHCO), otherwise known as a Medicare Local. The role of PHCOs is to support and enhance the provision of primary health care services (such as General Practice, physiotherapy, podiatry, and other allied health services) in order to reduce the current reliance on expensive secondary services, such as hospitals and specialists. In other words, to focus more on preventive and early intervention health care.

Although many of these important activities occur outside of normal consulting times, there will be a few occasions where Rob and Woody will be unavailable as a result of their involvement in these organisations. We hope that our patients will understand the need for local contribution to what will ultimately benefit all Australians.

Receptionist News

Lorissa and husband, Travis, recently celebrated the safe arrival of a little brother for Cohen. Griffin was born on 1st September, weighing 6lb 12oz, and we are pleased that mum and baby are doing very well. Congratulations to Lorissa and Travis!

After thirteen years of dedicated service as one of our receptionists, Margot recently announced her resignation to concentrate more on personal ventures. As mentioned in the winter newsletter, Margot has also been trying to recover from surgery for a troublesome shoulder injury. Always a pleasure to work with, she will be very much missed for her energy and enthusiasm, by staff and patients alike. We wish Margot all the best for her future endeavours, as well as for her health.

We would like to welcome Debbie as the newest addition to our reception team. She has become established in her role very quickly, and has already demonstrated her ability to effectively manage multiple tasks. We feel incredibly lucky to have such a fantastic group of reception staff, and Debbie has seamlessly fitted in to the challenging job at the front desk.

New Psychologist at The Elms

Mr James Duguid, psychologist, recently commenced part-time practice at The Elms. Consulting every Wednesday, James sees people with depression and anxiety, and he has a particular interest in sports performance psychology, issues related to chronic disease, and the psychology of substance abuse.

For a referral to James or our other psychologist, Dr Louise Hayes, speak to your doctor to see if you qualify for a Mental Health Care Plan in order to receive a Medicare rebate for his fees. Alternatively, you can see him privately, without involving Medicare, in which case you will not receive a rebate (although some Health Insurance companies do provide a partial rebate).

Patient Reminder and Recall System

To improve the health management of our patients, The Elms has a computerised system to send reminders to patients for services ranging from blood tests and pap smears, to immunisations and diabetes reviews. This service is coordinated by our Patient Recall Manager, Dot Ray, whom many will have known as our former practice nurse.

This service is provided free of charge to our patients, with your doctor being responsible for entering requests for recalls. However, patients can choose not to have reminders sent, in which case you should discuss with your doctor to have your name removed from the recall register.

Bowel Cancer Screening

Some patients over the age of 50 years would have received a kit in the mail from the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. This free Federal Government program has invited people who are turning 50, 55 and 65 years of age to collect samples of bowel actions to be tested for the presence of microscopic blood. This test, called a faecal occult blood test (FOBT), is used as a screening tool to see whether the person would benefit from a colonoscopy to rule out bowel cancer. Keep in mind that a positive FOBT does not necessarily mean you have bowel cancer. A positive result just means blood has been detected, and that a diagnostic colonoscopy needs to be done.

Patients who are over the age of 50 years, who have not been sent such a testing kit, can speak with their doctor to have the faecal occult blood test performed outside of this scheme.

Dental Service Access through Medicare

Patients would be aware that medical services are supported through Medicare by the payment of Government rebates which cover some of the cost of seeing your doctor. Less well known is the availability of Medicare rebates for dental services for eligible patients.

For a patient to be eligible for dental services under Medicare, they need to have a chronic (that is, persistent and longstanding), complex (that is, affecting multiple organ systems) medical condition which impacts on dental health, or which is made worse by an existing dental condition. For patients with an eligible medical condition, they need to see their doctor to have a General Practice Management Plan (GPMP) completed. On completion of the GPMP, the patient is required to have a Team Care Arrangement (TCA) organised by their doctor. This is a signed agreement with two other health professionals (medical specialists and/or allied health service providers) that they are involved in the management of the medical condition. Only once all these prerequisites are fulfilled may the patient be referred to a dentist for Medicare-eligible dental services.

This entire process is complicated and takes a long time to complete. It is not just providing a letter of referral to the dentist. The criterion provided by Medicare defining eligible medical conditions is very specific. If you think that you may be eligible, please speak with your doctor. Dentists may recommend a referral whilst not fully understanding which persons are eligible. It is up to your doctor to determine if you meet Medicare eligibility. As a result, we are answerable to Medicare for incorrect referrals and a failure to complete all of the above steps.

Online Consultations and Requests for Scripts

Many patients have already registered with Ozdocsonline, which is a secure means to communicate with your doctor online for such services as repeat prescriptions, renewal of lapsed referrals, and simple consultations. A small fee is charged for each use of this service, with the advantages being convenience, security and ease of access.

Please speak with our reception staff if you are interested in registering for this service. Further details can also be found at www.ozdocsonline.com.au

Mobile Phones



We request that patients please turn off their mobile phones during consultations, and refrain from using while at the reception desk. Thank you.