



# *The Elms Quarterly*

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



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

## **Spring 2011**

### **General News**

The Elms is proud to announce that we have successfully achieved re-accreditation as a quality medical practice. We were the first medical centre in the Central Highlands General Practice Network to receive accreditation, and have maintained this coveted status since 1999. Achieving accreditation means that we have fulfilled and maintained the standard of excellence set by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

### **Doctor News**

Recently whilst we had doctors away on leave, we had the pleasure of having Dr Sue Wright fill-in temporarily as a locum. Many will remember Sue from when she was a regular doctor at The Elms. She has enjoyed working these sessions with us again, and after being in several other practices over the last two years, she has re-iterated how lovely and pleasant The Elms is. Sadly, however, she has no plans of returning to regular consulting.

Dr Bien Le and Dr Nyree O'Connor have both settled in to The Elms, and have been well received by their patients. Dr Emma Scriven has indicated that she will be leaving us early next year to be closer to her family interstate, after having been with us for twelve months. We are currently holding interviews for potential candidates to fill the anticipated vacancies.

### **Medical Student News**

Eliza Muir has nearly completed her year-long placement with us, finishing in late November. Eliza has become part of The Elms and we will be sad to say farewell. We would like to thank all our patients for giving Eliza the opportunity to share their consultations with her. A new medical student from Deakin University will be starting with us in late January of 2012.

### **Psychologist News**

Dr Louise Hayes and Dr Meredith Rayner (who both hold PhDs in psychology) continue their very busy psychological services at The Elms. James Duguid, our other visiting psychologist, departed in September since being accepted into the PhD program at Wollongong University, New South Wales. We wish him the best for his research endeavours, and hope to fill this vacancy soon.

### **Melbourne Womens Imaging at The Elms**

Ken Taylor (who some years ago performed ultrasounds and X-rays at Bacchus Marsh Hospital) has commenced providing specialist ultrasound scans at The Elms. Ken works for Melbourne Womens Imaging, which specialises in high quality pregnancy and gynaecological ultrasound. Ken performs the scan which is then reported by Dr Charles Siles, an obstetrician and gynaecologist who has sub-specialised in this area. If you need a pregnancy or gynaecological ultrasound scan, you may wish to consider this service, which is available on Thursdays. Please speak with your doctor for further information.

### **New Fees**

From November our fees will rise in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI, otherwise known as inflation). Because the Medicare rebate has not increased at an equivalent rate, the gap between our fee and the rebate has widened further. Despite this, our fees are still well below what the Australian Medical Association recommends. The private fee for a standard appointment will be \$70.00, or \$60.00 if paid in full on the day.

### **Mental Health Care Plans and updated fees**

Patients who require the completion of a Mental Health Care Plan are reminded that this is a time-consuming process and requires a half-hour appointment with their doctor. We are disappointed that the Federal Government has slashed the Medicare rebate for mental health consultations, coming into effect in November. As a result, patients will be more out-of-pocket for these visits than previously. If you have any queries about fees, please discuss with our reception staff.

### **New improved pneumococcal vaccine**

For some years now, children have been receiving the Prevenar-7 anti-pneumococcal vaccine to prevent meningitis, infective arthritis and other infections. The Prevenar-7 vaccine covered against 7 subtypes of this bacterium. A new vaccine that covers against 13 subtypes is now being offered as a single catch up dose to children aged between 1 and 3 years of age who have previously only received the old Prevenar-7. If your child fits into this category, please make an appointment with our nurse for this free injection. The Prevenar-13 vaccine is now the standard anti-pneumococcal injection for the free Australian childhood immunisation program.

### **Flying with children - ear pain**

Young children flying in an aeroplane will often experience ear pain on descent because their narrow Eustachian tubes prevent middle-ear pressure equalisation (“popping the ears”). To reduce this discomfort it helps to offer the child something to suck or chew when the plane is descending. If your child is known to be prone to ear pain (recent ear infection, head cold or previous experience of ear pain), then you could try offering a decongestant medication such as Demazin or Dimetapp alone, or in conjunction with paracetamol (Panadol) or ibuprofen (Nurofen) at least 30 minutes before descent (or prior to take-off for short flights).

### **Getting the most out of your visit to your doctor**

Please be reminded that our standard appointment is **15 minutes** in length, unlike many other practices who have 10 minute appointments. If you think you need longer than 15 minutes with your doctor, it would be appreciated if you would book a longer time. Appointments that typically take longer include full medical check-ups, first visits to the practice by new patients, excision of skin lesions and other procedures, and complex or multiple problems.

Many people think that they only spend 5 minutes in a consultation. Actual timing of consultations suggests that this is almost never the case. Time seems to fly for patients during consultations. Our doctors may advise you to return for another appointment if everything cannot be dealt with at the one visit. Please respect other patients and our doctors by booking appropriate length appointments. If in doubt, ask our receptionists and they may be able to advise the length of time you may require. Also, we do not book more than one family member into the one appointment time. Your assistance in this will help us reduce other’s waiting time.

It is helpful if you can tell your doctor **all** the reasons for your visit at the **start** of the appointment so your doctor can allocate time accordingly and you can get the most important issues dealt with first. We want to provide the best health service we can, but this becomes compromised if we try to “squeeze things in”.

### **Violence, aggression and threatening behaviour**

We are aware that when unwell, people are often not at their best. Most people attending The Elms are lovely and we do our best to help everyone. Infrequently, some people display unsociable behaviour whilst on our premises.

Violence, aggression or threats against doctors, nurses, any staff or other patients at The Elms Family Medical Centre will not be tolerated.

Anyone behaving in such an unacceptable manner may be asked to leave the practice and no longer attend. Our local police have indicated that they will take any reports of threatening behaviour very seriously.



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