

The Elms



Family Medical Centre

Quarterly Newsletter

Keeping you in touch with developments at our Medical Centre

www.theelms.com.au



Spring 2015

The Elms has “come of age”, with the clinic celebrating its 21st birthday recently. Staff and their partners enjoyed a dinner party at The Plough in Myrniong, and as usual the meal was excellent and the company entertaining. The occasion was particularly special as we also recognised four members of staff who had reached their milestone of twenty years of service. Mandy (practice manager), Denise (receptionist), Dot (nurse) and Di (pathology collector) were acknowledged and thanked for their dedication and contribution in making The Elms such a great place to work. We congratulate them on their achievement!

Doctor news

We welcome Dr Amanda Gibbons to The Elms as our new general practice registrar. Amanda is a graduate of the Deakin University Medical School and is an alumnus of the Integrated Model of Medical Education in Rural Settings (IMMERSe) program. The IMMERSe program has medical students spending an entire clinical year attached to a rural town, with the aim of attracting doctors to country areas after they graduate. In 2011, Amanda spent her IMMERSe year in Ararat, and is now a registrar studying toward the specialist qualification of Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Prior to The Elms, Amanda has worked at the Western and Sunshine Hospitals in various medical and surgical rotations. As our patients may know, The Elms is also affiliated with Deakin University as an IMMERSe practice and we have been hosting medical students since 2011, with our current student being Russell Stanbrough.

Dr Carolyn Sebastian was welcomed back to The Elms after completing her six month outer rural rotation in Ararat. Carol first started with us in February 2014 and has since passed all the examinations necessary to be awarded Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Well done, Carol!

We also bid a temporary farewell to Dr Ayesha Munir who started maternity leave recently and has since had her second child, a baby boy. A lunchtime “baby shower” was hosted prior to her departure and Ayesha was presented with a large number of gifts, many of which were hand-made by staff. Ayesha will be returning to The Elms in August 2016, with six months spent in Kerang as part of an outer rural general practice rotation. We wish Ayesha and her family all the best as they enjoy their new baby son.

Appointment software upgrade

In the coming months, we will be switching to a different software package for making patient appointments. This upgrade will allow better integration with our clinical software and help streamline account keeping. We are already able to send SMS reminders to patients who have a valid mobile phone number on record. However, the most exciting new functionality will be the ability to offer online booking of appointments, which will help patients avoid the early morning rush for available spots. It is anticipated that the changeover may result in some delays as reception staff learn the new system.

We are still waiting for the conversion of our telephone system and internet to use the National Broadband Network (NBN). Due to widespread reports of NBN business users experiencing connection difficulties, we are taking all possible precautions to ensure a seamless transition. Up to date information about contingency contact arrangements will be posted on our Facebook site in the event of a telephone communication breakdown.

Visiting specialist practitioners

The Elms has a number of visiting medical specialists consulting from our rooms on a regular basis. Mr Binh Nguyen, general surgeon, consults every second Monday and operates locally at the Bacchus Marsh Hospital. He performs a full range of surgical procedures, including gastroscopy and colonoscopy. Professor Lee Kennedy, general physician and endocrinologist, is at The Elms once a month on a Thursday. In addition to managing hormonal conditions such as diabetes and thyroid disease, he also provides expert diagnostic support for complex medical presentations. Dr John Zhu, cardiologist, consults once a month on a Wednesday, and he manages heart related conditions such as angina, rhythm disturbances and heart failure. He also performs interventions such as exercise stress tests, cardiac angiograms and coronary stent insertion.

We are very fortunate to have such a good range of visiting doctors who together cover a broad variety of the most common medical and surgical conditions. If you need to see them, a referral from your general practitioner is required.

New reception desk for podiatry clinic

With the growth of services offered at The Elms, we have been running out of room at our front desk! To help with this, there is a new standalone reception desk for the podiatry clinic around the corner from the main reception area. At this stage, it will only be used on Monday (by podiatry receptionist, Josie) when podiatrist, Nick Squillari, is consulting. On Tuesday, podiatry receptionist, Sarah, will continue working from the main front desk for podiatrist, Gerard Zammit.

Patients can still present at the main desk where they will be directed to the appropriate receptionist.

Shopping centre development and disruption

There has been some major demolition works happening at The Village Shopping Centre, with the entrance at the southern end currently in the process of being reconfigured to open onto Main Street. As a result of these ongoing building activities, the availability of parking and flow of traffic has changed. In particular, the parking quadrangle in front of the clinic can only be accessed via the building underpass, and the roadway at the Subway restaurant is now exclusively an exit. These changes to traffic management are permanent. We understand that these changes have caused difficulty for patients trying to reach us but unfortunately we have no say in the matter.

We ask patients to please make allowances for possible difficulties with parking and traffic.

The “Good GP” television and media campaign

Patients may have seen television commercials highlighting the central role of the family doctor in the care of people and their families at all stages of their lives. The campaign, produced by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), was designed to raise awareness that having an ongoing relationship with a family GP was important, especially in relation to preventative healthcare and the management of chronic disease. When most people think of healthcare, the image of hospital treatment often comes to mind. In reality, most healthcare services are provided by GPs in the community. There are 134,000,000 consultations with GPs in Australia every year, with 80% of the entire population having at least one contact with their GP annually. However, despite treating so many patients every year, this only represents 8% of the entire national health budget. Another message conveyed by the commercials is that good GPs never stop learning but continue to develop their skills and knowledge through ongoing professional development programs. The Elms is a strong advocate for continuing learning, with a culture of having our doctors and staff involved with medical student teaching and postgraduate GP specialty training.

“We are proud to be an Accredited General Practice”

