

# 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)

### Spring 2023

Staff recently celebrated the clinic's 29<sup>th</sup> year with dinner at Houdini's Restaurant in Diggers Rest, with a magic-inspired theme in keeping with the name of the venue. We had 'Alex the Magician' perform a roving show which involved plenty of mind-bending tricks. Alex was a finalist on Australia's Got Talent, and his combination of humour and sleight of hand kept everyone entertained and guessing.

### Doctor news

A major milestone has been passed by Dr Amit Kumar who has reached his 10-year anniversary at The Elms. This achievement, however, has been trumped by an even more significant event – Amit has just become a father for the first time, with the safe arrival of a healthy baby girl. We wish Amit and Gitika an amazing parenthood journey with joy, well-being, and prosperity.

We are pleased to introduce Dr Tahmina Sultana as a new specialist General Practitioner at The Elms. Tahmina started with us in July after relocating from Colac. She has a special interest in women's health, antenatal care, paediatrics, chronic disease management, emergency medicine, and performing skin lesion excisions. Tahmina is an avid writer of fiction and she has had some of her works published.

GP registrar, Dr Andrija (Andrew) Pandza, has recently completed all the training requirements and examinations to apply for Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. We congratulate him on this achievement which is the culmination of many years of commitment and study. We are equally pleased that Andrew will be staying on at the Elms as a specialist General Practitioner.

GP registrar, Dr Kirby Campbell-Wood, recently completed his six-month placement with us and has moved on to his next post as part of his specialist training toward becoming a general practitioner. We wish him the very best as he progresses in his career. We welcome Dr Emily Thrower as our next GP registrar. Prior to starting at The Elms, Emily completed a six-month general practice rotation in the western suburb of Yarraville.

### Nurse news

The Elms welcomes the newest member of our nursing team, Ms Te Aniwa Makoare, who started with us in July. Te Aniwa is a registered nurse and she hails from New Zealand. She joins Catherine, Vicki, and Therese in providing patients with various services like immunisations, wound care, health assessments and assisting in medical and surgical procedures.

### Podiatry news

Medical Footcare Podiatry has been providing a comprehensive podiatry service at The Elms for over 10 years and recently announced the further expansion of their hours. Additionally, a new podiatrist, Ms Aishah Abdi, has joined the team. Consultations with podiatrists Zantana, Luke, Andy and Aishah are available on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and alternate Fridays. Appointments to see the podiatrist can be made by calling (03) 9449-9393.

## **Changes to whooping cough boosters in pregnancy**

Funding for the whooping (pronounced HOO-ping) cough booster in pregnancy was cut as of 1 July 2023. From that date, the whooping cough booster will be Government-funded only for the pregnant woman but not their partner. Pregnant women have the booster between 20 and 32 weeks of pregnancy. It is still recommended that everyone having contact with a baby less than 6 months of age should have a current (within 10 years) whooping cough booster. Please speak with your doctor or nurse for more information.

## **Funded genetic carrier screening for parents-to-be**

It has been announced that testing for genetic carrier status for parents-to-be will be funded from 1 November 2023. Also known as reproductive carrier screening, this test will be offered to all couples either before conception or in the first trimester of pregnancy. The basic test will check for cystic fibrosis, fragile X syndrome, and spinal muscular atrophy, and will be funded by Medicare. An extended carrier screening test covering over 500 other conditions is available but is not funded by Medicare (out of pocket cost approximately \$600). Reproductive carrier screening can be performed sequentially or as a couple. Sequential testing involves initially testing women who are planning pregnancy. Once their result is available, a decision is made on whether their partner also requires testing. Simultaneous (couple) testing is the preferred option when pregnancy has already been confirmed as it reduces delays in risk assessment, genetic counselling and diagnostic testing if required.

## **60-day medication dispensing**

A major Government policy to help reduce the cost-of-living pressures for people on long-term prescription medications is the commencement of 60-day dispensing from 1 September 2023. This means that for certain medications prescribed after 1 September 2023, patients have the option to have two months-worth of a medication dispensed instead of one month at a time. This reduces the number of visits required to the doctor and to the pharmacy per year. Doubling the amount dispensed at half the frequency means overall demand on medication supplies will remain the same over time. Patients concerned about having too much medication on hand have the option to remain on monthly dispensing, and the doctor also has discretion to stay with monthly dispensing according to their clinical judgement. Not all medications will be subject to the new policy and eligible items will be announced by the Government in three stages over a 12-month period.

## **Breast cancer screening program**

The Victorian breast screening program provides free mammograms to women aged between 50 to 74 years who have no active breast symptoms. Women between 40 to 50 years of age, or over 74 years of age are also eligible for free testing if they choose to do so, or if recommended by their doctor. Screening mammograms are not effective for those under 40 years of age. Please speak with your doctor for more information, or book a free mammogram with Breast Screen Victoria by phoning 13 20 50.

## **Asclepius vs Caduceus**

The Rod of Asclepius (consisting of a single snake entwined around a rod) is correctly used to represent the medical profession. It belonged to Asclepius, the Greek god of healing. However, another symbol, the Caduceus (consisting of two snakes entwined around a staff topped by a set of wings) is often mistakenly used instead. The Caduceus is the staff carried by Hermes, the Greek messenger god representing commerce, banking, and trade. The incorrect use of the Caduceus to represent medicine has been perpetuated by various organisations around the world, including many Government institutions (who really should know better!).

 = Rod of Asclepius

 = Staff of Hermes/Caduceus

**“Complete ongoing care for you and your family”**

