



The Elms Quarterly

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



www.theelms.com.au

Summer 2010/2011

We hope everyone has a very happy, safe and healthy summer holiday season. The Elms celebrated Christmas at The Plough Bistro in Myrningong. We all had a great time, enjoying the food and country hospitality of the venue.

Doctor News

We are excited to announce several new doctors starting at The Elms.

Dr Emma Scriven is joining us part-time as a GP Registrar of the GP Training Program. Emma lives in Bacchus Marsh with her husband and young baby. She has been working in Sunbury in general practice over the last 6 months. Since she has made Bacchus Marsh her home, we are hopeful she will join our team for the long term. **Dr Farnaz Sabet** will be joining us for six months in the GP training program. She has also been working in Sunbury for the last six months. **Dr Harry Weisinger** is joining us part-time as a GP registrar. He has been working at Melton Health in the emergency care unit. Harry has another career as a qualified optometrist and will be running the new School of Optometry at Geelong's Deakin University when he is not working with us as a GP.

Dr Abha Chikarsal has successfully passed her specialist exams to gain her Fellowship of the RACGP. This is the pinnacle of GP training and is the endpoint for all our GP trainees. We congratulate her and share her joy in this achievement. **Dr Faiza Khan** is staying on with us in a part-time capacity to allow her more time to care for her young boys. **Dr Chris Maclay** is staying on with us throughout 2011 as he works towards his Fellowship of the RACGP. **Dr Manju Nadiger** is also staying on with us as a GP registrar.

Dr Rob Hosking and **Dr Woody Wu** continue as partners in the practice.

Nurse News

Congratulations are due to our practice nurse, **Judy Higgs**, who has passed her Graduate Certificate of Diabetes Education through Deakin University. Judy worked very hard throughout 2010 and is graduating shortly at a ceremony at Deakin. She will be able to give advice about the condition and help patients monitor their diabetes to prevent complications. We will be developing a program of visits to Judy regarding these diabetes check-ups.

Medical Student News

The Elms Family Medical Centre is embarking on an exciting new path by joining with Geelong's Deakin University to become a teaching practice for medical students. In the past we have had occasional medical students in the practice from Monash and Melbourne Universities, as well as an association with the John Flynn Rural Scholarship program. These have only been short-term placements of medical students. This new arrangement places a student in our practice for the whole year.

In 2011, we will have **Eliza Muir** as our Deakin student. She will be supervised by all the doctors in the practice, but particularly Dr Rob Hosking and Dr Woody Wu. With agreement from you (our loyal patients), she will consult with you before your appointment with Rob or Woody. If you agree, she will then follow your journey through the health system if you require referral for investigation or further treatment.

Feedback from other practices is that patients find it a very positive experience having a medical student involved in their care. Eliza will be living in Bacchus Marsh for the year, so please make her welcome as a new resident to the town as well as in her professional capacity.

New Facilities Upstairs

To accommodate Eliza, and to improve our ability to provide ongoing training for all staff, we have expanded our facilities upstairs. There is now a new meeting/education room plus a study room for our medical student, and a consulting room for our psychologists.

New Computer System

Our current computer system needs to be upgraded both in hardware and software. Hence, throughout 2011 there may be some disruptions as we install and adjust to the new system. The new system will be more modern and offer greater reliability, as well as have new functions for improved patient care and service. For example, we will be able to communicate more easily with specialists via secure messaging, and we will be able to analyse our practice data better to ensure we are providing the highest quality care.

Non attendance at appointments

Appointments at The Elms are always at a premium and it is very annoying for patients who cannot get to see a doctor to hear that there have been people who did not attend for their booked appointment. Some of these people have even received reminder phone calls the day before. If you are unable to, or do not intend to, use your appointment please call reception with adequate warning so we can allocate your appointment to someone else. For those who repeatedly miss appointments, we will be forced to charge a fee for non-attendance. This fee is not reimbursed through Medicare, and will also apply to patients who are normally bulk-billed.

As we anticipate that our new computer system will allow us to utilise SMS reminders to patients, please ensure your contact details are up to date when booking appointments so we can contact you once the system is established.

Medico-legal issues

Prescriptions and referrals: Due to concerns about our professional liability, doctors at The Elms are not able to write prescriptions or referrals without a patient attending. This means you are not able to order prescriptions or referrals over the telephone. People will need to be organised and make appointments for check ups and remember to check what prescriptions/referrals are required before those appointments. If you need a prescription/referral urgently, you may see *any* doctor in our practice. If only a repeat prescription/referral is issued (i.e no other consultation issues are raised) then you may be bulk billed.

Test results: We would like to remind our patients that our receptionists are not medically trained and so are not permitted to give results of tests over the phone unless a doctor has specifically asked them to. Receptionists are not being difficult if they say to you “yes the results are back, but I can’t tell you what they are”. They are acting under the rules of the practice and this is for your safety. Your doctor needs to have an arrangement in place with you about how you are to receive your test results. This may require a return visit, or a phone call from a receptionist or doctor, with specific information about the results.

E-mail communication: One solution to the situation with prescriptions and test results may be for those patients with internet access to communicate with their doctor directly using the secure Ozdocsonline website (see www.ozdocsonline.com.au). If your doctor agrees, then you may be able to request repeat prescriptions/referrals and receive results online. This allows us to have a record of communication between doctor and patient in a secure environment. Contact reception to see if you could use this service. Fees apply for the use of this service (cheaper than consultation fees).

Immunisation against Whooping Cough

The Whooping Cough epidemic continues. Please ensure your young children are up to date with immunisations. Parents of newborn babies can also receive free Whooping Cough immunisation (which also boosts against tetanus and diphtheria). If you would like to be immunised, but are not in the above groups, you can buy the immunisation from the pharmacy (with prescription) for about \$50-60. Please discuss with your doctor or nurse.