

# 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)



### Summer 2014/2015

It's "business as usual" at The Elms despite the redevelopment of The Village Shopping Centre where we are located. The temporary inconvenience of construction work reducing car parks and easy access to the clinic will ultimately result in better amenities and services around us, so we are optimistic that it will be worth it.

### Doctor news

One of our doctors, Dr Nyree O'Connor, recently spent several weeks performing aid work in Papua New Guinea on the Youth With A Mission (YWAM) Medical Ship. She was the sole medical officer on that particular outreach voyage and visited a number of remote coastal villages. Nyree and other volunteers provided essential health services, such as immunisations and medical assessments. We are very proud of Nyree and her achievements.

### Medical student news

Melinda Pattanasri, our Deakin University medical student, has now finished her year-long placement with us. Many patients have given Melinda the opportunity to participate in their consultations, which is vital for the training of future doctors in clinical skills. Melinda is the fourth Deakin University medical student we have mentored and we will continue our teaching role next year with a new student. We would like to thank our patients for their ongoing support of the active educational role that The Elms is involved in.

### New dietetic service

We now have a monthly dietetic service provided by accredited practicing dietitian, Melanie Bouras. Melanie provides expert nutritional education and counselling for both adults and children. She has expertise in a broad range of dietary conditions, including weight management, food intolerance and allergy, coeliac disease, irritable bowel syndrome, nutritional deficiency, diabetes, and childhood feeding difficulties. Melanie may be consulted privately (no Medicare rebate although a rebate may apply if you have appropriate private health insurance) or through your doctor via a Team Care Arrangement (TCA) as part of a General Practice Management Plan (GPMP) for patients with qualifying chronic complex medical conditions, such as diabetes.

Melanie consults one Friday each month and appointments can be made by phoning her on 0410-666-853.

### Psychologist news

Clinical psychologist, Dr Louise Hayes, will be taking a 6 month sabbatical from early 2015 to focus on several projects, including research and writing another book. Apart from her work here at The Elms, Louise has a very hectic work schedule including teaching responsibilities at the University of Melbourne.

We have a new clinical psychologist, Dr Anu Paradkar, commencing practice at The Elms. She has expertise assessing and managing a broad range of psychological conditions affecting both children and adults. Anu has a particular interest in treating complex depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, grief, personality disorder, acquired brain injury and chronic pain. She is available for consultations every Thursday and appointments can be made by contacting Ranges Psychological Services on 0425-240-021.

## **Podiatrist news**

Adding to the busy team of podiatrists is Nick Squillari, who has joined Gerard and Stephanie at The Elms. Nick provides treatment for all common podiatric conditions, performs general feet and nail care, as well as diabetes foot assessments. Nick will be consulting every second Monday, alternating with Stephanie, with Gerard consulting every Tuesday.

Appointments can be made by phoning Medical Footcare Podiatry on (03) 9449-9393.

## **45-49 year old health assessments**

It is well recognised that prevention and early detection of health problems is preferable to late intervention. To target those most likely to benefit from this approach, we provide a formal comprehensive health assessment for patients aged between 45 and 49 years of age, inclusive. This consultation takes 30 minutes, part of which is spent with our practice nurse. It covers collecting a full medical and family history, physical examination and in some cases, special tests. You will be offered advice about any relevant lifestyle or medical interventions and possible referrals. Medicare provides a rebate for one assessment per person who is between the ages of 45 to 49 years.

If you are interested in having this once-off health assessment, please speak with our receptionists and specifically book for a “45 to 49 health check”. All 45 to 49 year old health checks will be **bulk-billed**.

## **Recent changes to Medicare Care Plan rebates**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014, Medicare has changed how rebates apply to services involving General Practice Management Plans (GPMP) and Team Care Arrangements (TCA) for patients with eligible chronic and complex medical conditions. It is now prohibited for a doctor to provide further medical consultation on the same day as a GPMP or TCA consultation for the same patient. What this means is that if you see a doctor for a GPMP or a TCA, they cannot combine this with a consultation for an unrelated matter on the same date. You may, however, have the separate matter dealt with by a different doctor on the same date. We understand that this may cause consternation but it is a Government rule that all doctors are bound by.

## **Vitamin D testing**

Also announced on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014 is the restriction of vitamin D testing. Medicare will now only cover the cost of vitamin D tests in patients with deeply pigmented skin, osteoporosis, malabsorption or those with persistent lack of sun exposure due to residential, occupational, medical or cultural reasons. Patients can still request vitamin D testing but will have to pay privately if they do not have an eligible indication.

## **Patient feedback and suggestions**

Through the feedback box in our waiting room, patients can leave suggestions of ideas or improvements for the clinic. When considering suggestions, we have to take into account occupational, health and safety requirements, as well as possible impact on patients.

We have responded to requests for later appointments by extending our weekday opening hours to 8.00pm, to better cater for patients who may prefer to come after work or have other commitments during the day. Another frequent suggestion is for a water dispenser in the waiting area. To reduce the chances of spills and risk of slippage, the water dispenser is kept behind reception. Patients wanting a drink can ask staff for water at any time. We have trialled having rubbish bins in the waiting area but have found that it gets very messy and smelly due to the disposal of everything from food to used nappies. For the comfort of everyone, we encourage that all rubbish is taken home for disposal.

**“We are proud to be an Accredited General Practice”**

