

# 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 2023/2024

The Elms farewelled long-serving clinic nurse, Vicki, with a celebratory dinner at The Plough in Myrniong. Vicki has been with us since the inception of the clinic in 1994 so we can say that her retirement is well deserved! We wish Vicki all the best in her retirement, and she will no doubt be kept busy with the recent arrival of her first grandchild.

### Doctor news

Dr Laura Machan, one of our GP registrars, has successfully passed her written examinations toward the specialist qualification of Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. This is a great achievement, particularly given that she has had to juggle work, study and parenthood!

### Medical student news

Deakin University medical student, Jordan Lee, has completed his year-long placement at The Elms, and will be back for a further 6-week rotation in 2024. We enjoyed having Jordan with us throughout the year and the feedback from patients is that he has been very well received. We thank all the patients who have given him the opportunity to participate in their consultations during his placement with The Elms. We will be hosting another medical student from Deakin University next year. His name is Elisha Johns, and like our previous medical students, he is part of the Rural Community Clinical School of Deakin University that encourages a focus on non-metropolitan health care education.

### Nurse news

With the retirement of Vicki, The Elms has been actively looking for another clinic nurse to fill those shoes. Due to a health workforce shortage, this has not been an easy task. After a long search, we are pleased to welcome Elizabeth Moyle as part of our nursing team. Liz will be joining Catherine and Therese on a part-time basis, and will provide nursing services such as immunisations, wound care, blood pressure checks and assisting in medical procedures with the doctors. Our nurses also perform health assessments and other chronic disease management activities.

### Take advantage of 24-hour online booking

Patients may make an appointment by ringing reception, but this is not possible outside of normal clinic hours. Another way to book an appointment is to use our online appointment service via our clinic website, or through the Auto Med Systems (AMS) Connect mobile application. Scan the following QR codes to download the application relevant to your mobile device:



◀ Scan this for Apple devices



Scan this for Android devices ▶

## **MyMedicare patient registration**

The Australian Government is in the process of rolling out a new model for general practice service and funding. Called MyMedicare, the first stage involves patients voluntarily nominating their 'home' clinic and usual GP. Details of the program remain limited but it is anticipated that if a patient attends their home clinic for care, they will be eligible for additional funded services. The purpose of this arrangement is to encourage continuity of care, better coordination of service provision, and to support chronic disease management. Patients may still attend a clinic other than their home clinic for acute issues, and may change their home clinic or de-register at any time. The easiest way to nominate your home clinic is via the Express Plus Medicare mobile application, or via the Australian MyGov website. We expect more information about the benefits of registering over the coming months.

## **Medicare bulk-billing change**

Since the lifting of the Covid-19 pandemic emergency response, Medicare has started to enforce the need for written patient consent to be bulk-billed. Whether it is a face-to-face consultation, a phone consultation or a video consultation, every time bulk-billing occurs the patient must consent in writing. To make it as convenient as possible for patients (especially if the bulk-billed service was not in person at the clinic), we are using an SMS-based consent system. After the bulk-billed service has occurred, an SMS will be sent to the patient's mobile phone and all that is needed is for the patient to confirm their date of birth and then press 'accept' to let Medicare know. Patients who do not complete this process each time to consent will miss out on bulk-billing for future services.

## **Patient notification of results**

Having tests requested is not uncommon when seeing your doctor, whether it is to help diagnose a problem, for screening purposes, or to follow up a previous abnormality. Equally important is ensuring that the results of the tests are acted upon. This may include the interpretation of the results, arranging other tests or referral, or putting in place a reminder for future testing. It is usual at the time the test is requested that the doctor discusses how the results will be communicated to you. If you have not heard from your doctor or the clinic about your results, we recommend contacting reception. It is not safe to assume that 'no news is good news.'

## **Shingles and Covid-19 vaccine update**

From 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023, a more effective vaccine against shingles, called Shingrix, will be available free to people over 65 years of age (or over 50 years of age if an indigenous Australian), or over 18 years with a specific immune deficiency diagnosis. The Shingrix course consists of two injections separated by 2 to 6 months. Vaccine supplies are currently limited so please contact reception to register your interest.

From 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023, an updated version of the Covid-19 vaccine will be released. The booster is recommended for everyone 75+ years of age, and should be considered for anyone between 18 to 74 years of age with health risk factors. Please speak with your doctor to discuss recommendations and eligibility.

## **'Furry tongue' and non-setting jelly**

Patients may occasionally experience a 'furry tongue' where the surface of the tongue becomes coated in a white or discoloured layer that feels soft or hairy. Even though it is harmless, people may worry about the appearance. It is caused by the build up of old tongue surface cells, food debris, and bacteria, amongst other things. In addition to good oral hygiene, another way to reduce the appearance of a 'furry tongue' is to suck on fresh kiwi fruit or fresh pineapple. These fruits contain naturally-occurring enzymes that break down the protein that makes up some of the furry coating. These same enzymes can stop jelly from setting if present in fresh fruit added whilst making the jelly.

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

