



# *The Elms Quarterly*

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



[www.theelms.com.au](http://www.theelms.com.au)

## Winter 2011

### General News.

Our staff recently celebrated the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Elms Family Medical Centre at the Eynesbury Homestead Restaurant. This is a great venue and everyone enjoyed relaxing with colleagues who we often don't get to catch up with during our busy working days.

### Doctor News.

**Dr Emma Scriven** has settled in well to her part-time position, juggling that with caring for her young daughter. Emma and her husband reside in Bacchus Marsh, which makes travelling to work much easier for her. We will have another locally-living doctor commence with us in August. Her name is **Dr Nyree O'Connor** and we are hoping that by residing locally, she may stay for the long run. She is moving to The Elms after completing six months of GP experience in Echuca.

Also starting with us in August is **Dr Bien Le**. Bien completed his medical training in Vietnam, as well as a Masters degree in Information Management at Monash University. He has worked in Melbourne metropolitan hospitals for a few years and has more recently been doing after hours locum work in Melbourne. We hope he will settle in as well as others have before him.

**Dr Manju Nadiger** is temporarily leaving us to complete 6 months of outer rural experience in Ararat, as part of the post-graduate training program in General Practice. We wish him well and look forward to his return in February 2012.

Congratulations to **Dr Faiza Khan**, **Dr Chris Maclay** and **Dr Farnaz Sabet** who recently sat and passed their final Fellowship examinations. This is the end-point of their studies over the years it takes to achieve the qualification of Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

**Dr Abha Chikarsal** is leaving us in mid July to take up a position in Sunbury as she is finding the travel from her home in the northern suburbs too much of a burden. **Dr Farnaz Sabet** is also leaving in July after her 6 month rotation with us. Finally, **Dr Harrison Weisinger** will be departing to take on a position closer to his home in Geelong. Those who have met Abha, Farnaz and Harrison will know that they are all great doctors and we are sad to see them go. They will be greatly missed by patients and staff alike, and we wish them all the best for the future.

### Psychologists at The Elms

**Dr Louise Hayes** (PhD) and **James Duguid** continue to practice at The Elms, and have proven to be extremely popular. They are soon to be joined by another psychologist, **Dr Meredith Rayner** (PhD). Meredith has a special interest in families and parenting skills, and will commence her private practice in late July. Appointments with Meredith can be made via our receptionists, who will provide her contact details. If you qualify for a GP Mental Health Plan (regarding psychological conditions) you may be entitled to obtain a Medicare rebate for seeing a psychologist. Please speak to your doctor to see if you are eligible.

### Private Health Insurance

As doctors, we often see the difficulties encountered by people without private health insurance. Medicare is a great system, but it can be very difficult to obtain care in the public system without lengthy waiting periods. Public hospitals should be utilised by those who cannot afford insurance and the private system by those who can. If you can afford it, we encourage you to take out private health insurance for hospital care. People often tell us they don't get much value out of their insurance. We would like to point out that health insurance is just that: it is insurance. It is not a product one hopes to use, and is no different from your car or home insurance. Insurance is supposed to give peace of mind, just in case you need it.

### **Ambulance Membership**

Ambulance membership is another product one hopes never to use. However it is good to know it is there in an emergency. If you require an ambulance and do not have ambulance membership (except pensioners) it could cost you thousands of dollars to be transported to hospital. This is especially a problem in Bacchus Marsh as it is a long way to the nearest hospital with full emergency facilities. Even an ambulance to Bacchus Marsh Hospital from within Bacchus Marsh will cost over \$800.

To join, call Ambulance Victoria on **1800 548 484**.

### **Immunisation update**

The Australian government has updated the childhood immunisation schedule to include an expanded pneumonia vaccine. Previously, young children were given Prevenar-7 and now they will receive Prevenar-13. This covers 6 more serotypes of the pneumococcal bacterium (in other words it is even better than the last one). There will be a catch-up offered from October 2011 to children aged 12 to 35 months. This will update children who have previously received the Prevenar-7. Please speak to our nurse if you want more detail regarding this, or book an appointment if you feel your child qualifies for the catch-up injection.

### **Referrals - What are they?**

A lot of patients seem to have the misunderstanding that a referral is just a piece of paper that gives them access to a specialist. In fact, a referral is a letter of communication between doctors that gives information to the specialist to provide you with better care (such as current medications, previous illnesses and operations, allergies, test results and the situation or reason for referral). Hence, it is a document that takes time and care to generate. This is why an appointment is usually required to write a referral and to actually decide if referral to a specialist is necessary. Also, a new referral is generally required each year in order to update the specialist to changes that may have occurred in that time (such as new allergies or medication changes, or recent test results or procedures).

### **Influenza Immunisation**

It is not too late! The 'flu injection is free if you are in a high risk group (all people over 65, pregnant women, and anyone who has a chronic disease such as moderate to severe asthma, other lung diseases and heart diseases). Please see our nurse to discuss immunisation with the 'flu vaccine.

### **Whooping cough (Pertussis) outbreak**

The whooping cough outbreak continues and the Victorian Government is providing a free once-off booster immunisation to new parents. This is to protect newborns as they are not fully immunised until after 6 months of age. Since immunity wanes as one gets older, adults are at risk of catching whooping cough, and in turn passing it on to babies they come in contact with. If you are a new parent, please speak with our nurse about this important injection.

If you would like the booster but are not a new parent, it can be obtained on a private prescription for about \$40 to \$50. This injection also protects against tetanus and diphtheria.

### **Cancelling appointments that are no longer needed**

Many people have voiced that it is difficult to get in to see a doctor. This is due to a nation-wide shortage of doctors. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please ring and cancel with adequate warning so we can schedule someone else who needs to see a doctor. For people who repeatedly miss appointments, we will have to charge a fee for non-attendance. This will not be reimbursed by Medicare and will also apply to those people who are normally bulk-billed.

### **The Elms Website and Electronic contact with doctors**

Please don't forget we have a very comprehensive presence on the web. You can find out all about our practice and various members of the team at [www.theelms.com.au](http://www.theelms.com.au)

At this site there is also a link to [www.ozdocsonline.com.au](http://www.ozdocsonline.com.au) which is the company that provides our secure communication link if you would like to contact your doctor directly using the internet.



**We request that patients please turn off their mobile phones during consultations, and refrain from using while at the reception desk. Thank you.**