

The Elms Family Medical Centre

Quarterly Newsletter

Keeping you in touch with developments at our Medical Centre

www.theelms.com.au



Winter 2016

The Elms Family Medical Centre recently celebrated its 22nd birthday at Eynesbury Homestead, with staff and their partners enjoying dinner and an evening of conversation. We acknowledged one of our receptionists, Leonie, for her fifteen years of loyal service, with a special presentation and thank you. The Elms is fortunate to have such dedicated and professional staff who make our medical centre a pleasant and supportive place to visit.

Doctor news

We are extremely pleased to have three more of our doctors achieve the final qualification in General Practice recently. Drs Anmar Naoum, Carolyn Sebastian and Ummu Rauf were awarded Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (FRACGP) and are now specialists in General Practice. The Elms congratulates them on passing a significant milestone in their careers.

Patients may not be aware of the fact that since the mid-90s, all medical graduates who aspire to be family doctors have to complete further post-graduate training to specialise as a General Practitioner. It is therefore rather antiquated to consider family doctors as “just a GP” or “a jack of all trades, master of none”. The speciality of General Practice is that of the whole patient and their life circumstances, and provider of primary (first contact) and ongoing care. We are very proud to be practitioners of the only speciality that does not limit ourselves to just one age group, gender, body part or disease!

Medical student news

Our Deakin University medical student, Elisa Pruss, has been very appreciative of all the patients who have given her the opportunity to take part in their consultation and care. Elisa is part of a select cohort of students who, for the entire third year of their four-year medical course, are attached to a general practice and local hospital rather than solely in a large hospital. We believe that there is no better learning opportunity than interacting with real people, and we thank our patients for giving Elisa such an invaluable educational experience.

Dietitian news

Ms Vivian Tsang is an Accredited Practising Dietitian and Accredited Nutritionist from Nutrition Health & Wellbeing who has taken over from Ms Leeanne Azzopardi. Vivian provides advice about food and nutrition to promote good health, and consults fortnightly on Tuesday morning. She has particular expertise in sports nutrition, as well as the management of diabetes, weight issues, gastrointestinal health and aged care nutrition.

Vivian 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. Please discuss with your doctor regarding whether you are eligible for Medicare-rebated dietetic services. Appointments can be made by speaking with our reception staff, or phoning (03) 5367-6662.

Psychologist news

Ms Lauren Ryan, psychologist, commenced consulting at The Elms in March and is available fortnightly on Tuesdays. She provides psychological counselling for adults, and has a special interest in occupational mental health, anxiety, depression, stress, and relationship issues.

Lauren may be consulted privately (no Medicare rebate although a rebate may apply if you have appropriate private health insurance) or through your doctor under a Mental Health Care Plan (Medicare rebate available). Please discuss your eligibility for the Medicare rebate with your doctor. Appointments to see Lauren can be made by telephoning Ranges Psychological Services on 0425 240 021.

Medicare rebate freeze

The Australian Government has announced that the most recent Medicare rebate freeze introduced in 2014 will be extended until 2020. This is on top of a previous 9-month rebate freeze in 2013. This means that the amount the Government will return to private fee-paying patients will remain locked at 2014 levels, resulting in increasing gap payment costs for patients. For patients who have been bulk-billed, it means that clinics will not have had any increase in income to compensate for inflation and rising costs. The consequence is that private patients will pay more per visit, and bulk-billing availability cut back for others. Even if the rebate freeze is abolished, the decades of inadequate indexation of the Medicare amount will mean that we will have to limit bulk-billing for standard consultations strictly to pensioners, concession card holders and children under 16 years of age.

After many years of the clinic absorbing rising costs for medical supplies in the treatment room, all patients will be required to pay a set booking fee for elective (planned) operations and procedures. Additionally, the elective procedure itself will no longer be bulk-billed, although concession card holders will receive a substantial discount. However, some treatment room appointments will remain bulk-billed, such as childhood immunisations and 'flu clinics. Your doctor will be able to discuss with you any proposed fees so that you may make an informed decision about having a procedure.

Government My Health Record

In the last Elms Quarterly newsletter, we re-introduced the Government My Health Record, previously known as the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (PCEHR). This is a secure online summary of your health information and is particularly useful for those with complex or chronic conditions as it allows the patient to share important medical details with treating doctors, hospitals and other healthcare providers. Individuals retain control over their own My Health Record, including what it contains and who can access it. We encourage all our patients to register for their own My Health Record, even if they do not have complex medical problems as it will ultimately lead to better coordination of health care.

Once registered, you can ask your doctor to upload a health summary which can include your current medication list, allergy list, present and past medical problem list (not your actual clinic record), and your immunisation list. This information can easily be updated at each doctor visit whenever a change has been made, such as a medication dose adjustment or a new diagnosis. Online registration is available at www.myhealthrecord.gov.au , or by speaking with your doctor.

Courtesy SMS reminders for appointments

For patients who have provided their mobile phone number, we endeavour to send a reminder via SMS of upcoming appointments. However, please be aware that the SMS reminder is no substitute for making sure yourself of when your appointment is. For reasons beyond our control (such as patients changing their number, the mobile phone network being down, patients being out of range, etc.) sometimes you may not receive the reminder. The SMS reminder is a courtesy only, and definitely not infallible!

“We are proud to be an Accredited General Practice”

