

Welcome to the first edition of **AGNAS** for 2007. This edition contains information about education activities and the priority topics being addressed in 2007.

Thank you to many of you for your warm welcome to the Aged Care Program, I am learning quickly about the complex issues facing both GPs and providers of aged care services. I look forward to seeing many of you over the coming months at visits to local facilities, networking and/or education opportunities. It is certainly shaping up to be a busy year and I look forward to working with you.

*Julie Sutherland, Program Officer*

### Aged Care Panel Activity in 2007

The Aged Care GP Panels Initiative (ACGPPI) is where Divisions have facilitated formal arrangements between aged care facilities and their nominated GPs to undertake Medication Advisory Committees for example, or where GPs have expressed interest to work on one of the working groups to pursue local priority issues.



All panel arrangements for 2007 have been reconfirmed with GPs and residential aged care facilities.

**GPs Assigned to Facilities:** All facilities should now have received notification of their assigned GP and the allocated tasks in early January.

**Medication Advisory Committees:** As part of the Divisions panel model GPs participate in Medication Advisory Committees at eighteen residential aged care facilities.

**Facility Discussions / Interviews with Assigned GPs:** Once again in 2007 we are utilizing GP & DON / Manager meetings to facilitate discussion regarding the key concerns and issues. This communication will be fed back to the broader working party to implement strategies and activities to address these. I have requested to participate in these interviews wherever possible to facilitate communication and to assist in my orientation to the aged care program.

#### **Working groups:**

The Palliative Care working group will continue to meet to address issues impacting general practice. A core component of this role is to link with other service providers and to work closely with residential aged care facilities.

A Special Interest Working Group will work on falls prevention issues, protocol development to streamline Residential Medication Management Reviews and contribution to care plans.

## Coming Events 2007

### **PARTNERSHIPS - TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

#### **The General Practitioner and Residential Aged Care Kit**

Both GPs and RACF staff are invited to participate in this interactive training module based on the "Tools of the Trade Kit". The sessions will provide education and practice on Comprehensive Medical Assessments, case conferencing, care planning and information about tools to assist GPs and aged care staff determine after-hours care arrangements, communication processes and scheduling care for residents.

The training is made of the 3 components:

#### **Workshop One: Thursday 19th April, 7.00pm—9.00pm**

An interactive session on organization tools and systems for multi-disciplinary care of residents in and out of hours; overview and case study of the residential aged care MBS items, including advice and tips of use of items in practice.

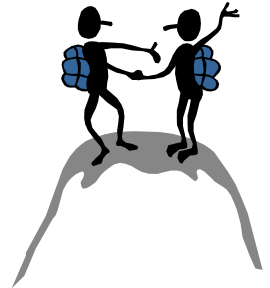
**Practice Activity:** GPs conduct a CMA and contribution to care plan

#### **Workshop Two: Thursday 3rd May, 7.00pm—9.00pm**

An interactive session on case scenario of a case conference in residential aged care, case study on an aspect of clinical management de-brief on GPs & RACF experiences of CMAs and care planning.

Attendance at both sessions plus completion of the practice activity entitles GPs to 30 category 1 RACGP CPD points.

Watch out for your invitation in the mail soon!



### **PALLIATIVE CARE EDUCATION**

The Palliative Care Working Group are currently in the process of organizing an interactive Palliative Care Education Evening for GPs and Residential Aged Care Facility staff. This event is scheduled for late July 2007. This session will involve case based discussion with a panel of experts as we tackle some of the ethical considerations in Palliative Care. More details will be available in the next edition.

### **DON NETWORK MEETINGS**

The DON lunchtime networking meetings will continue in 2007.

The first meeting was held on Wednesday 7th March with a focus on Falls Prevention. The group discussed initiatives used to prevent falls within their facilities. There were many reports of success with alert systems such as Invisa Beams and Sensor Mats for frequent fallers.

Deborah Manning, Project Officer for the Older Persons Active Living Falls Prevention Program spoke to the group about the service mapping being undertaken in the area and the working group that is developing protocols, practices and procedures for an integrated approach to screening, assessment and management of falls.

Deborah mentioned the possibility of a train the trainer program for staff working in residential aged care facilities. This is something that is being considered by the working group for later this year.

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 6th June 2007** and the group will discuss the Resource Kit for implementation of the APAC Guidelines for Medication Management in Residential Aged Care Facilities.

## Information Technology in Aged Care

Over the past 18 months the Aged Care Panel conducted a pilot of the use of Medical Director in three facilities:

- Uniting Aged Care—Trewint
- Hallam Residential Care
- Berwick Residential Aged Care Facility

This pilot has now been completed and whilst it highlighted the number of advantages to having IT access in aged care such as printing of drug chart labels and medication lists; there were also a number of limitations namely that not all GPs visiting aged care facilities are familiar with Medical Director and as a result this impacts on its use.



As a result the Panel is now exploring the possibility of assisting facilities and GPs to access their medical records via remote access. Meaning that the GP records at the medical clinic are accessed via the internet from the RACF. This can be done where the facility has internet access (broadband is best) and there is a computer at the Medical Clinic that is not being utilized at the time of the visit to the RACF. There are a range of other requirements needed to ensure remote access is safe and efficient.

More information about remote access will be distributed once it is available.

## Surviving the Maze

Surviving the Maze is a web-based series of information sheets for family carers of older people. They provide information about caring strategies, the service system and how family carers can work best with doctors and other staff. They normalize feelings that family carers often experience and offer hints and tips for dealing with difficult situations.

There are more than 60 information sheets available and they have been grouped into the following sections.

Caring for an older person	Considering Residential Care	Dealing with Hospitals	Caring in Residential Care
What is a carer?	Where to start?	Medical Staff in hospital	Visiting your loved one
How to organize support services	Financial & legal considerations	Your rights in hospital,	How to feel comfortable at the facility.
Respite care—getting a break	Aged Care Assessment	Aged care Assessment in Hospital	When a change in facility might be needed
	Preparing for admission	Discharge from hospital	

The information sheets are available at:

**[www.survivingthemaze.org.au](http://www.survivingthemaze.org.au)**

Or by telephoning the Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre on 1800 242 636

## Useful Snippets

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### Have you checked all the useful information on the Divisions Website?

All tools developed by our Working Groups, along with past presentations from the Palliative Care and Dementia Education evenings, and a huge variety of other information can be found on the Divisions Web Site under Resources / Aged Care. The Division encourages resource sharing. If you have anything you feel would be useful, please contact Julie on 03 9706 7311.

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

Click on > Resources then > Health Program then > Aged Care

Examples of the types of information available:

- Palliative Care Resources— Enduring Power of Attorney paperwork
- Urine testing protocols
- Communication tools e.g. nurse initiated medications,
- Comprehensive Medical Assessment Template

### Warning—Analgesic Skin Patches

There have been a number of safety warnings issued following reports of deaths and serious side effects in patients using analgesic skin patches. Although the published alerts specifically refer to fentanyl patches, safety concerns and principles of use also apply to buprenorphine patches. One report involved a 77yr old woman who applied her fentanyl patch and then a heating pad over the patch. She was later found dead. Her death was attributed to increased fentanyl absorption as a result of the heat pad and the suspected application of a second patch without removing the first.

There has also been a report of the death of a child who applied one of his mother's patches to his body, as well as reports of children who escaped serious harm following self-application of the patches.

*This information was taken from The Encapsulator, Southern Health Pharmacy Department, Dec 2006*

### Residential Aged Care Coronial Communiqué

The Division received information about the first edition of this quarterly publication. It focuses on issues relevant to Aged Care that arise during the investigation of the death of older persons. This publication is available via [www.vifm.org/cgi-bin/getObject.cgi?id=o502](http://www.vifm.org/cgi-bin/getObject.cgi?id=o502)

This edition addresses the use of physical restraint. There are two case studies highlighting the need for policies and procedures, and looking at care practices and bed rails.

Several websites are provided for reports, guidelines and decision making tools around this issues of restraint and working with challenging behaviours.

If you would like any further information about the Division's Aged Care program please contact the:

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