

## Telemedicine good for our e-health

Doctors groups have welcomed Federal Labor's election commitment to fund telemedicine to the tune of \$392.3 million. Announced on Monday, the Rural Doctors Association, the AMA and AGPN have strongly endorsed the program which will see Medicare rebates for online consultations at a cost of \$250.5 million over four years and \$56.8 million spent on financial incentives for GPs and specialists to participate in online services. The rebates will commence in July 2011.

In other e-health news, the Federal Government has announced that if re-elected, it will incrementally roll out its \$12.5 million electronic health records initiative using three divisions of general practice: GP Partners in Queensland, GP Access in NSW and Melbourne East GP Network in Victoria. AGPN's Dr Emil Djacic claims these network members will "provide excellent value for money in terms of giving a clear road map for the future roll out of this system."

## Recognising the hype

Why did Norman Swan on last week's ABC Health Report come up with a different conclusion to the previous week's warning on the link between calcium supplements and heart disease?

Our educational pharmacist Jo McMahon recommends an online learning module called FINDING EVIDENCE RECOGNISING HYPE to help GPs assess this sort of conflicting information. It is a recognised QPI activity for the Practice Incentives Program.

To qualify for points this triennium, the FERH program must be completed and application for QA & CPD or ACRRM points submitted by 7 December 2010. Here's a [link](#) or search the NPS website at [nps.org.au](http://nps.org.au).

## Links we're lovin...

[Healthy Kids Checks](#) – all the information you need for the four year old health check, Items 709 and 711

[www.yourhealth.com.au](http://www.yourhealth.com.au) – all about the **National Health Reforms**

[www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au) Independent, not-for-profit and evidence based, the NPS enables better decisions about medicines and tests

[www.nswrdn.com.au](http://www.nswrdn.com.au) **Need a locum?** NSW RDN can help... find out the [costs](#) and [submit a request](#)

[www.gpconnect.com.au](http://www.gpconnect.com.au) Get thee to our annual conference!

Click this link for SGPN's [Closing the Gap](#) resources

Best **Closing the Gap** link of all: SGPN's Indigenous Project Officer Robin Vote by [email](#) or phone our Goulburn office on 4821 0436

## Immunisation news

### Presentation for Rotarix® is changing

GSK has advised that the presentation for Rotarix® is changing to a new 'squeeze tube' (latex free) and the packaging has been made smaller. The formulation and indications have not changed and will continue to be supplied as a 1.5ml liquid suspension and offered as a 2-dose course at 2 months and 4 months of age. Distribution of the new presentation is expected to commence this week. This information is provided to assist Divisions to manage queries from immunisation providers.

### Pertussis prevention

In response to the recent pertussis epidemic in NSW, a range of strategies have been implemented to promote vaccination and protect vulnerable infants:

- The vaccines usually administered at 8 weeks of age (Infanrix Hexa, Prevenar and Rotarix) can all be given as early as 6 weeks of age
- The vaccines usually administered at 4 years of age (Infanrix-IPV and Priorix) can all be given as early as 3.5 years of age
- The adolescent booster dose of pertussis vaccine is being brought forward from 15 years of age (Year 10) to 12 years of age (Year 7) over a three-year period by offering pertussis vaccine to Year 7 and 10 students in 2010, 2011 and 2012 as a catch-up before routinely offering pertussis vaccine to Year 7 students only from 2013 onwards
- NSW Health is continuing to write directly to new parents registered with Medicare to remind them of strategies to protect their baby, including the importance of vaccinating their baby on time, that their baby should be kept away from anyone with a cough and that everyone in the household should be up to date with their pertussis vaccinations
- NSW Health is continuing to offer free booster doses of pertussis vaccine to new parents, grandparents and carers of infants less than 12 months of age via GPs, Community Health Centres and Aboriginal Medical Services as a cocooning strategy to protect infants too young to receive their primary course (480,000 doses of vaccine distributed to date).

*Our immunisation coordinator Sharon King can assist with all your vaccination enquiries. Contact Sharon at SGPN's Goulburn office on 4821 0434.*

### RNs - Travel immunisation for beginners

*Wednesday 25 August, The College of Nursing, 14 Railway Parade Burwood.* This College of Nursing course will develop your skills and knowledge in clinical travel medicine in areas such as vaccines and vaccine requirements for travel, indications for use, documentation, liability issues and valid consent. Gain confidence in providing pre-travel advice including immunisations and other aspects during travel. The course is \$183.50 for RN members and 7 CPD hours are on offer. Enquiries to College of Nursing 02 9745 7500.

## What's on? Education and events for GPs, PNs and practice staff

**Pathology Clinical Meeting** Tuesday 24th August, 6pm, Balcony on Shore Restaurant, Upstairs Adelaide Hotel, Moruya  
**Topics:** 'Diagnosis at Needlepoint' presented by Professor Sujatha Fernando, Director of Pathology West and 'Pathology Testing for Influenza and Respiratory Viruses' presented by Professor Dominic Dwyer, Acting Director CIDMLS, Microbiology, Westmead. Light refreshments will be served. Call Mark at Moruya Hospital Pathology on 44741578 for more information.

**Registered Nurses - Travel immunisation for beginners**  
Wednesday 25 August, The College of Nursing, 14 Railway Parade Burwood. The course is \$183.50 for RN members and 7 CPD hours are on offer. Call College of Nursing 02 9745 7500.

SGPN is hosting the following training over the coming weeks. Flyers have been sent to all practices or contact Sharon King on 4821 0434 for further information.

**Ear Irrigation for nurses** Wednesday 1 September, Canberra, 10am-5pm and Tuesday 12 October, Narooma, 10am-5pm

**Evaluation of the lower limb using Doppler ultrasound for GPs and Practice Nurses** Friday 17 September, Moruya 10-1pm

**National Stroke Foundation – Guidelines for Best Practice**  
13 September, Whale Motor Inn Narooma. SGPN is hosting a CPD dinner meeting with a presentation by St Vincents Hospital rehab specialist Dr Josephine Braid. Bookings to Sue Berry, [email](mailto:sueberry@nsw.gov.au) or phone 4474 5100.

**GP Connect 2010** 12-14 November, Hotel Realm Canberra. SGPN's joint conference with ACT Division of General Practice. Partnering with ANU Rural Medical School and RACGP, the program is shaping up to be a cracker. Visit the website for more information [www.gpconnect.com.au](http://www.gpconnect.com.au).

**Aged and Dementia Care Symposium** Friday 22 October, Batemans Bay. SGPN is co-hosting this full-day education event with GSAHS, Alzheimers Australia and the NSW Government. Nursing and Allied Health CPD hours: 7. Medical: 10 Category 2 points with RACGP and 5 PDP points with ACCRM. For further information and registrations contact Alzheimer's Australia NSW Education Services on 02 8875 4653.

**SARHNI Update (Sexual and Reproductive Health Nursing Update, formerly known as the Gynaecology Nursing Update)** 27 October 2010, 9am-3.30pm, Monte Pio Hunter Valley Motor Inn, Rutherford. Family Planning NSW is hosting its annual one-day sexual health update for nurses and midwives. Full program is available [here](#).

**BreastScreen** has its mobile screening service at the following network locations: Yass: 16-20 August; Young: 23 August – 3 September; Crookwell 6-11 September. Call BreastScreen on 132050 for more information or patient bookings.

## End of an era in Yass

The Cabin Medical Practice is closing its doors after delivering more than a century of medical care to the Yass community. Dr Jonathon Williams will see his last patient at The Cabin, which opened in 1895, on September 8 before recommencing practice at West Belconnen Health Cooperative in mid-October. Dr Williams' practice staff have told us how supportive the town's other general practices – Old Linton and Atherfield - have been in taking on their patients.

SGPN would like to thank Dr Williams and his practice staff team for their active participation in network activities over the years and wish them all the very best.

## GP Professional development

CPD Events continue to roll out and last week in Cooma, Dr Teresa Foce gave an insightful and well received talk on patient responses to treatment for major depression.

Then, in Merimbula on Thursday evening, a healthy mix of doctors, medical students and pharmacists enjoyed an evening with Dr Sally Newsome, visiting endocrinologist.

Eurobodalla doctors are invited to attend an educational evening at On the Pier Restaurant, Batemans Bay next Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> August. Dr Peter Solin will be speaking to the topic "Sleep Apnoea and associated health risks". If you would like to attend, please either [email](mailto:psolin@eurobodalla.com.au) or phone Sue Berry on 4474 5100.

This week the ANU students are out and about on their "Rural Week" so we are all working to make them feel welcome and at home, and hopefully creating some great memories so that rural practice is a consideration for their futures!

## SGPN recommends...

### NPS educational visit: sleep management

Five per cent of GP prescriptions are for hypnotics. One in six Australians over the age of 65 are on long term sedatives. Do these patients have true insomnia or is it sleep dissatisfaction? What role do the z drugs and newly approved CR melatonin play?

Our NPS educational pharmacist Jo McMahon can visit at a time and place convenient to you to present the NPS training in sleep management. Here's a link to the [flyer](#) on our website.

Jo says NPS can also make this program available to Aged Care Facility staff and to let her know of any ACF you believe could benefit. Contact Jo by [email](mailto:jomc@nps.com.au) or on 0438 435 552.