

House Call

Newsletter of the Community Consultative Committee of the IDGP

Volume 1, Issue 1

February 2000

Special points of interest:

* Over 80 per cent of Australians will need advice or treatment from a General Practitioner in any one year.

* On average, each Australian will consult a GP almost five times a year.

* There are approximately 230 GPs who practice in the area covered by the Illawarra Division of General Practice.

* The Illawarra area has a population of approximately 250,000 people.

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Bringing General Practice To You

It is with great pleasure that the Illawarra Division of General Practice (IDGP) launches this, the first edition of our newsletter specifically for the community.

"House Call" will be produced quarterly and aims to open the communication channels between the community and local General Practitioners.

In this and future editions you will find out more about the activities of the Illawarra Division of General Practice and local General Practitioners. As well, we hope that it will also make you, the community, more aware of how you can raise and discuss issues about health that affect our community with local GPs.

"House Call" is one of the ways in which the Illawarra Division of General Practice continues to involve the community in its activities.

We congratulate you on your interest in our community's health. Working together is the only way that we can ever achieve the best services & Health for All!

A Warm Welcome from the IDGP

On 13 November 1999 the Illawarra Division of General Practice Board met for a planning day. Our aim was to decide on what we would like the Division to achieve in the period 2000 to 2003. One of our goals for this period is "to improve the integration of general practice with the community to improve the quality of health care". This newsletter and our Community Consultative Committee will be the main ways that we will achieve this goal. The General Practitioner representatives on the committee -

Dr Robert Bird, Dr John Watson, Dr Sam Sharma and myself, Dr John Cheung - have an important role to represent the ideas and opinions of all GPs in our area and to ensure that we not only provide information from the GPs view but that we learn and transfer information from the community to GPs and the Board of the Division. It is through sharing information that we will be able to discover the parts of our health care that need improvement. Together we can then develop



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ways to improve what we do and how we do it. As the new chairman of the IDGP Board, and GP representative on the Community Committee, I look forward to informing and involving consumers in our activities in the coming year.

All the best for a safe and happy holiday season.

Dr John Cheung

Community Liaison at the IDGP



The Illawarra Division of General Practice has quite a long history of involvement and interaction with the community.

The Illawarra Division of General Practice has involved consumers in some activities from early in its history. Consumers and community members have been able to work alongside general practitioners as partners, often initiating the contact and providing specific expertise to the Division about the issues and strategies

which will work with particular groups. The focus of the Divisions ongoing commitment to consumer involvement is our Community Committee and Community Network. These strategies provide consumers with an opportunity to have a say, and GPs (through the Division) the opportunity to request input or assis-

tance from the community. Support for consumer participation does not stop there. All employees are responsible for ensuring community involvement, consultation and participation in all aspects of the Division's functioning from planning to implementation of programs to evaluation.

Health Consumer Profile - Monica Lowe



Monica Lowe, Community Representative and chairperson of the IDGP Community Committee.

Monica Lowe is one of our eight community representatives. She was elected as chairperson by the Community Committee. She has extensive experience in the health system, having worked in a number of high profile positions in a nursing capacity. She is currently semi-retired but

has strong ties with Illawarra Area Childcare. Monica believes that the community has a definite role to play in helping GPs to provide the best services possible. If a level of trust is nurtured between the parties, and the association between the community & GPs is on

an equal footing, great things can be achieved. "Being involved with the Division is a learning experience for all involved," said Monica. If you would like to raise or discuss any issue with Monica or any member of our Community Committee please contact the Division on 4226 7052.

Your Say

Letters to the Editor

If you have any comments about general practice services or other health services that are also of concern to your GP, we would love to hear from you.

(Contact details on page 4)

Future issues of *House Call* will contain information and profiles about specific individuals, groups and upcoming events. Our intention is for this newsletter to be of real use to the consumers of health and general practice services in our area.

If your support group/ community organisation is holding an event, or would simply like both GPs and the wider community to be more aware of you, please contact us. Address info to "The Editor - House Call"

(Contact details on page 4)

"House Call will be of interest and use to you and other consumers if you use and contribute to it"

The Next Edition of "House Call" is June 2000.

Information for inclusion should be received by Friday, 19 May 2000

The Community Consultative Committee

The Community Consultative Committee of the Illawarra Division of General Practice provides a regular and structured meeting between local General Practitioners, the Division and the local community. To do this a small group of consumers (or community representatives) and General Practitioner representatives meets to discuss issues felt important by their

communities or the particular section of the community that they represent.

The general role of the Community Committee is to:

1. Provide ongoing consumer input and feedback to the Division for strategic planning, and the development of programs
2. Create a relationship with the community that allows for lobbying to achieve desired changes

3. Further identify needs in the community in order to target programs effectively for the Division
4. Provide feedback to the community
5. Assist in identifying community members to be community representatives for specific Division programs.



The Community Committee brings GPs and Consumers together to discuss issues considered important by their communities.

Meet Your Representatives

When nominations were called for representatives for our Community Committee we were thrilled with the number of interested people who wanted to get together with local GPs to improve the state of health in our area. Even more so, we were impressed with the skills and interest of members of our community. To say selecting the reps was a difficult task is an understatement. All members of the selection

panel, including the consumer representatives, found choosing very difficult.

If you missed out this time, you can still have input to the Division through the committee reps or via this newsletter. Why not nominate for our next vacancies?

Our current representatives are drawn from a wide geographic spread (Gerroa to Austinmer).

They bring with them

experience in such diverse areas as womens & mens health, disabilities, child & youth health, health of older people and non english speaking people.

Our eight community representatives are: Yalau Rangiura, Mary Jack, Lyn Bedford, Brianna Smith, David Johnson, Margaret Chadwick, Jan Farmer, and Monica Lowe.

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Issues of Interest

In future editions of *House Call* we hope to include snippets of information about local, state, national

& international health news.

If you are aware of any items that might be of interest that could be

included in the newsletter please send it to us at: PO Box 1198, South Coast Mail Centre 2521.



Health news from around the world or your own backyard can be included in *House Call*

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**Illawarra Division
of General Practice**

Best Wishes to you for the New Year
from all at the IDGP

The Illawarra Division of General Practice is an organisation which supports and represents General Practitioners. It was developed to provide opportunities for GPs to work with their local colleagues, consumers and other health or community services. It aims to achieve wider health improvements in the community.

The Illawarra Division of General Practice (IDGP) has GP members who work in the area stretching from Helensburgh in the north, to Gerroa in the south and west to the foothills of the escarpment. We are currently one of 123 Divisions of General Practice across Australia. The Illawarra Division is managed by a Board of Directors, consisting of working GPs, a community representative and Division management.

What's Happening At the Division

The Illawarra Division of General Practice has a number of different program areas on which it is currently working. The activities chosen aim to improve the health of the Illawarra community, or to enable GPs to have a greater impact on our health. In this edition we outline briefly two of these programs.

Practice Management

Practice management is about assisting GPs to make the most out of their practice and chosen career. In turn they are able to then offer the best available care to the community. Activities such as training GPs in business planning and computerising their surger-

ies helps to provide a better service. The Division is also currently providing training to GP receptionists to give them greater skills in such things as office procedures, infection control, confidentiality and accreditation of practices. There are a number of activities that the Division is providing for your GP that are focused on practice management. In future editions we will provide more examples.

Illawarra Target 2000

You may have seen regular Target 2000 articles in local papers or news stories on TV or radio. Illawarra Target 2000 is a campaign to promote healthy living in

the Illawarra.

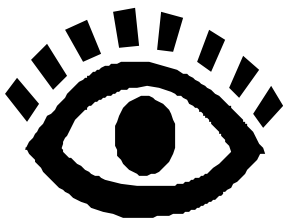
"We're not asking you to turn your life upside down," said organiser Joanna Munro.

"Even a 10 minute walk will benefit your health.

"Illawarra Target 2000 is challenging you to make just one change to your lifestyle, before the Sydney 2000 Olympics and enjoy the health benefits," she said.

The project is possible through unique partnerships between leading health, business and community organisations and individuals.

What will your change be?



This regular section of *House Call* will open your eyes to the activities being undertaken by your local Division of General Practice