

House Call

Newsletter of the Community Consultative Committee of the IDGP

Issue 3

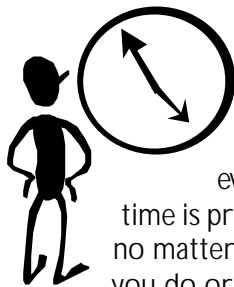
December 2000

The Illawarra Division of General Practice (IDGP) 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.

Inside this issue:

Time for a Visit to Your GP?	1
Partnerships in Mental Health	1
Introducing Yalau Ranguira	2
... A Special Message	2
Illawarra Health Care Interpreter Service	3
Your Voice in the Illawarra	3
Health Tips: Fun in the Sun!	4
What's Happening at the Division?	4

Time for a Visit to Your GP?



We live in busy times and everyone's time is precious, no matter what you do or where you're from. GP waiting times is one of the issues the IDGP Community Committee has tried to address with some positive advice.

A committee member recently reported on some of the frustrations felt by members of the community.

"A man who is a very loyal patient of his GP once confided, 'It is very difficult to see my GP. The

normal waiting time for him was two hours or more most of the time. I closed my shop for two hours to go to see him. On many occasions, it took me three hours for a visit. He has been my GP for a long time and he knows all my medical history. I do not feel comfortable to change to another doctor now.'"

We know a general practice is unlikely to run to an exact timetable - it's not that sort of business. However, by following a few common sense procedures, waiting times and frustrations may be reduced, making your visit to the doctor a more pleasant experience for all parties.

- Make appointments for all family members who need them.
- Tell the receptionist if you require a longer appointment.
- Make a priority list of questions to ask your GP.
- Ring the surgery before you leave for your appointment to see if the surgery is running on time.
- Find a doctor that suits you and stay with them or that practice.

Further information regarding waiting times is available in the Community Committee brochure, titled "Be Partners in Health", available at your GP's surgery or from the IDGP.

Brianna Smith
Editor

Partnerships in Mental Health

The GP & Mental Health Services Partnership Project is a 12 month project funded by the NSW Centre for Mental Health and managed by the Illawarra Institute for Mental Health. The project will work through the Illawarra and Shoalhaven Divisions of General Practice and the Illawarra Area Health Service Mental Health Services (IAHS-MHS) and will involve GPs,

specialist mental health care providers, consumers and carers. The aim of the project is to develop, implement and evaluate a GP & MHS Partnership Model that meets the needs of the Illawarra community through improved collaboration and coordination of services for people experiencing mental health problems.

The emphasis of the project will be on the development of initiatives that are both achievable and sustainable, and that will relieve the burden of mental health care for GPs, MHS and the community.

For further details, queries or comment please contact Vicki Biro, Illawarra Institute for Mental Health, phone (02) 4221 5606 / 4207 or e-mail vbiro@uow.edu.au.

Introducing Yalau Rangiuira



*Community Representative
Yalau Rangiuira*

My name is Yalau Rangiuira and I have lived in the Wollongong area for nearly 20 years. I come from the Cook Islands. I am married to a beautiful woman and we have five children – three girls and two boys. I am 43 years old, and I enjoy playing sports and fishing. I am also part of the Lighthouse Christian Church here in Wollongong.

I have completed an Associate Diploma in Social Science at Wollongong TAFE, as well as having completed a degree in Sociology and two years studying Psychology at Wollongong University. I am also taking courses in other areas specialising in working with youth and community services.

I am currently working for Lighthouse Community Care Ltd as a Manager, working with homeless

youths to provide supported accommodation for needy single males and females aged between 16 and 25 years. I am also working part-time for the St Vincent de Paul Crisis Centre for homeless men at Coniston.

For the last 10 years, I have been employed as an interpreter on a casual basis, working for the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Telephone Interpreter Service, Centrelink and the Illawarra Area Health Service.

My interest in health issues began in 1991, working for the Illawarra Area Health Service as an interpreter for the Cook Islands Maori language, as well as getting involved within our community by interpreting/translating medical information, and appointment consultation for various health services in

the Illawarra.

I am one of your consumer representatives on the Illawarra Division of General Practice Community Committee. I have been allocated the portfolio of NESB Representative, to ensure that particular sections of our community are considered and represented in discussions. The representatives on the Community Committee aim to help improve communication between GPs and the people of our community.

For the last 16 months, I have been experiencing how important it is for the Community Committee representatives to become more involved with local GPs, by talking more about the health issues that concern both sides. Now I have more respect for GPs than I did 16 months ago.

... A Special Message

If you are interested in raising your concerns through the Community Committee you can contact the Illawarra Division of General Practice on phone 02 4226 7052. Your details will be given to the relevant Community Committee member.

I have a special message for the many young people in our community looking forward to having a beautiful summer. As we approach the end of the year 2000, be cool ... be happy ... have a nice, healthy body ... say "NO!" to drugs. Protecting our health is the most important thing we can do in our lives today. When you lose your good health to drug addiction, it's very hard to get it back. There's a fine line between having a good time and having your



life completely turned around. There are many drugs of addiction available on the street to young people. If you need help to know what the difference is between illegal and legal drugs, or if you want to find out more information, please go and see your local GP in your area.

Yalau Rangiuira

Illawarra Health Care Interpreter Service

The Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS) was established to assist health care providers to carry out their professional responsibilities in a cross-cultural environment. The service also provides interpreters for people who are deaf.

Scope in the Illawarra

The Illawarra HCIS is funded to provide free professional interpreters to NSW Public Health facilities and units in the Illawarra, Southern and Greater Murray Area Health Services.

The scope of the service was extended to private practitioners in the Illawarra Area Health Service (IAHS) following an IAHS Board decision.

This special concession only applies in the Illawarra. Specialist appointments (and general practitioner appointments on occasion) may be accepted, providing NSW Health appointments are given priority. The Illawarra HCIS is only able to accept bookings for specialist appointments during office hours, and if an interpreter is available. General practitioner appointments may be accepted in circumstances of special need.

All appointments are taken on the understanding that the interpreter may be called to a public health system appointment at short notice, in which case the private sector appointment will be cancelled. The Illawarra HCIS is unable to provide inter-

preters for any other health care providers.

Health Care Interpreters have often experienced long waiting times at doctors' surgeries, which has made them late for their following appointments. On such occasions, interpreters may have to inform doctors' receptionists that they need to leave by a certain time and ask, if possible, that the doctor sees the patient before such time is due.

In this issue of *House Call*, we have raised the issue of waiting times in doctors' surgeries, and attempted to outline why this may be occurring, and how the situation may be improved. We welcome your comments and suggestions on this issue of great importance to the community.

My Lam Huynh



"The Illawarra HCIS is funded to provide free professional interpreters to NSW Public Health facilities and units in the Illawarra, Southern and Greater Murray Area Health Services."

Your Voice in the Illawarra

Feel like you've got something important to say to the community about health? Would you like to let people know more about your health organisation, service or support group?

Your health voice in the Illawarra is "Get Well", the Illawarra Division of General Practice weekly radio program on community station 106.9 Vox FM.

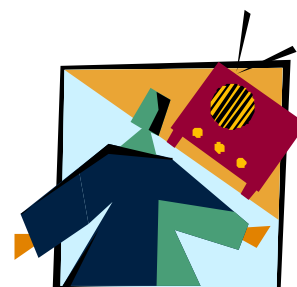
"Get Well" goes to air every

Thursday at 12.30pm. The program includes 30 minutes of interviews, music and community announcements on various health issues that concern our community.

We are currently planning our programs for 2001 and invite you to contact us if you would like to participate in an interview or contribute to our "Health Happenings" segment. The program is informal, and often includes consumers

speaking about their own personal experiences with a particular health issue. If you provide a health service or are involved in a support group in the Illawarra, we would love to hear from you!

For more information on "Get Well" contact Louisa Raft on 02 4226 7052 or e-mail lraft@idgp.org.au. And don't forget to tune in to "Get Well" **every Thursday at 12.30pm on 106.9 Vox FM.**





Health Tips - Fun in the Sun!

Skin cancer is now more common than all other types of cancers combined. Two out of three people who live their life in Australia will be treated for at least one skin cancer. One thousand people die from skin cancer per year in Australia. Skin damage from harmful UV light is cumulative - the more you are exposed the more you are at risk.

Adequate sun protection plays a huge role in stopping skin cancers. To protect yourself from the sun's harmful UV light you need to avoid the middle of the day, ie 10am to 4pm, when the sunlight is strongest. Cover up **at all times** when outdoors. Use physical barriers such as a wide brimmed hat, long sleeved t-shirts, and invest in a sun shade such as a beach umbrella or tent - and use it! Remember to have an adequate supply of sunscreen and reapply it regularly to all exposed areas, don't forget the neck, ears, hands and face. Have a look at the many sunproof varieties of beachwear available. Encourage your family to wear these as research has shown that childhood exposure to sunlight seems to be important in the development of all types of skin cancers.

Finally while at the beach obey the lifeguards, swim between the flags and enjoy the day. If you are unfortunate enough to be stung by a bluebottle, immediately remove any visible tentacles and apply ice to the area. Vinegar is not recommended except for the box jellyfish which is only found in the waters of northern Australia.

Dr Robert Bird

Illawarra Division of General Practice Community Committee

Editor

Brianna Smith

Postal Address

PO Box 1198

South Coast Mail Centre NSW 2521

Business Address

Suite 4, Level 1,

336 Keira Street

Wollongong NSW 2500

Phone: (02) 4226 7052

Fax: (02) 4226 9485

E-mail: idgp@idgp.org.au

Your community representatives

Margaret Chadwick

Monica Lowe

Andrew Chatfield

Yalau Rangiuira

Mylam Huynh

Brianna Smith

Mary Jack

John Wade

We're on the Web!
www.idgp.org.au

What's Happening At the Division ?

ADHD Community Meeting

The Division recently sponsored an informative evening on the condition of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) on 1 November at the Fraternity Club. This forum was open to members of the public as well as professionals from the fields of medicine, paediatrics, psychology, and the state and private school systems.

Statistics show that 1 in 20 children suffer from ADHD and community interest in this condition was reflected by the large crowd of over 300 people

attending on the evening. A panel of speakers included Dr Paul Hutchins, staff Physician, Child Development Unit, New Children's Hospital Westmead, and world expert on ADHD. The panel presented on a variety of topics from the fields of education, paediatrics, speech pathology and psychology. The meeting concluded with a 30 minutes for questions from the audience, facilitated by Dr Hutchins.

The take home message from the evening was that ADHD needs to be addressed by a **team** of people addressing **all**

areas of development. - a community approach!

The contact person for the ADHD support group is Margaret Bell, phone 4271 5924.

AGM

The Division held its Annual General Meeting on 26 October, at which a new Board of Directors was elected. Board members for 2000/2001 are Drs John Cheung (Chairman), Elizabeth Magassy (Vice Chair), Ananth Rao (Treasurer), Anna Di Marco, Rene Dostal, Malcolm French, David Grant, Jennifer Smiley and John Watson.

The Next Edition of "House Call" is April 2001. Information for inclusion should be received by 2 March 2001.



IDGP Community Committee