

House Call

Newsletter of the Community Consultative Committee of the IDGP

Volume 4, Issue 2

September 2003



IDGP Community Committee

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.

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Editorial



By House Call Editor and Consumer Representative Helen Gapps

The Committee attempts to canvas consumer health concerns as widely as possible and so needs to have a broad representation from the community. We were very pleased at the last meeting to welcome three new members, Janet Pinney, Will Temple and Edger du Bois, and sorry to farewell a hardworking member (and previous House Call editor), Brianna Smith. We wish her well and say thank you for all her contributions.

Substance abuse is an ongoing crucial issue for many people, particularly parents. On 19th May this year the Committee held a Community Drug and

Alcohol Forum in Wollongong and the event attracted a lot of interest. 80 parents, teenagers and health professionals came to hear the four keynote speakers; Mr Tony Trimmingham, Founder and Counsellor, Family Drug Support; Mr Peter Kelly, Psychologist, Acting Manager, CONTACT Drug and Alcohol Services; Ms Jo Lunn, Psychologist, Kedesh Rehabilitation Services and Sergeant Garry Keevers from the NSW Police Department.

The speakers covered such topics as the most popular drugs used in the Illawarra and their effects, the ways parents can protect young people (or unwittingly put them at risk), police work to stop the growing incidence of spiked drinks, recent research findings and where to go for help. Those present indicated that both the presenters and the available brochures and information material were much appreciated and some people also gave the Committee some very useful ideas

for future forums. Anyone who wants to know more about the presentations from the May Forum can contact Janice Samways at the Division on 4226 7052.

Another community issue which has concerned the Committee has been that of separation and suicide, particularly male suicide. One of the Community Committee's GP members had gathered a great amount of research and anecdotal evidence to inform the other members and at the last meeting it was decided to host a meeting of interested parties so that participants could establish an Illawarra support group if they wished. The Committee is now seeking expressions of interest for this inaugural meeting so please contact Janice Samways at the Division on **4226 7052** before 31st October if you would like to be involved.

Recently, the Committee has also

been discussing Headway Services where community access and support are provided for adults with Acquired Brain Injury. In this issue of House Call you will find further information about Headway whose staff are most anxious that their facility should be more and better utilised. Other ongoing important topics for Committee meetings are the proposed changes to Medicare and the shortage of GPs in the Illawarra.

From the above you can probably see the range of work the Committee undertakes on behalf of community health consumers. Committee members welcome contact from readers anytime and particularly from those people who have a special health concern they wish investigated.

The Next Edition of "House Call" is December 2003. Information for inclusion should be received by 30 October 2003.

New roles, new faces on the CCC

As we congratulate Helen Gapps and wish her every success in her new role, as acting Editor we would also like to thank outgoing Editor Brianna Smith for her valuable contribution in the past.

Familiar faces on the CCC are Jenny Vaughan-Floyd, Dimity Simes, Maristela Stjepanovic, Christina Bjork and Drs Puris and Turner.

Meanwhile, three new representatives were recently welcomed to help facilitate Illawarra GPs' identification of consumer views and needs, and so improve health services through the Illawarra Division of General Practice.

The three new faces are Illawarra residents Edger du Bois, Janet Pinney and Will Temple. This edition of House Call will profile Edger du Bois.

Edger du Bois

Edger was born in the Netherlands and has lived in Australia since 1957. In 1984 he was diagnosed with Diabetes (type 2) and in 1989 joined the



Wollongong Branch of Diabetes Australia and served as Treasurer/Secretary for a number of years.

Edger has been very busy in the community and is also a member of Healthy Cities, Wollongong, and Vice-President of the Management Committee of the Koonawarra Community Centre.

As a member of Toastmasters International for 17 years Edger feels that this has given him communication skills that should help with his work on the committee. Through his own health experiences, Edger feels that he has a fair idea of what people in the community need and looks forward to contributing through the CCC.

HEADWAY services available

Headway Illawarra, located at 4 Mercury Street, Gwynneville, has been providing community access and support services to adults with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) for over 20 years. An interesting variety of day programmes and social activities is available to participants as well as personal advocacy and other assistance.

Although over 8,000 people in NSW suffer a serious brain injury each year, very few patients, carers or medical professionals seem to be aware of the facilities which are so readily available at places like Headway.

"Our current enrolment is steady at around 30 participants and there must be dozens more people within our region, including stroke-recovery patients, who should be taking advantage of our government-funded services" says Headway Chief Executive, John Roach. "We are hoping to raise community and professional awareness about what we have to offer and we hope to feature Headway in a future edition of *House Call*. In the meantime, everyone is most welcome to drop in to see us at any time during normal business hours or to check our website www.headway.org.au .



Home Medicines Review(HMR)

A Home Medicines Review (HMR) is a thorough check of all the medicines you are taking, by a pharmacist at the request of your GP, and with your agreement. The review usually takes place in your home, at a time convenient to you. It gives you the opportunity to spend time asking questions about your medicines in a relaxed and non-hurried environment.

Anyone living in their own home can have a Home Medicines Review if their GP thinks their condition and the medicines they are taking make the review worthwhile. Some situations are more likely to put people at risk of medicine-related problems, such as:

- taking five or more regular medicines or taking more than a total of twelve doses of medicine per day;
- recent changes to your medication routine;
- attending a number of different doctors, both GPs and specialists; and
- having recently come out of hospital.

Anyone – you, your carer, a family member, your pharmacist or community nurse – can ask the doctor if this service might be helpful for you. Only your GP, however, can actually refer you for a Home Medicines Review. He or she completes a referral form, with your consent, which you take (or your doctor sends) to your preferred community pharmacy.

The pharmacy will arrange a suitable time for a pharmacist to visit you and discuss your medicines in detail. It is a good idea before the visit, to think about or write down all the questions you would like answered and any concerns you have about your medicines. Make sure you have all your medicines available, including ones bought without a prescription at a pharmacy, supermarket or health food store, those bought from any other health professionals (eg naturopath), or any prescription medicines from other doctors or hospitals.

The pharmacist discusses the results of the review with your GP, who in turn will arrange a

consultation with you to develop a medication management plan together. Home Medicines Review can help you better understand your medicines and how to take them. This increased understanding can help to reduce your risk of having medicine-related problems and can improve overall health.

Please talk to your GP or pharmacist if you think you might benefit from a Home Medicines Review. As with any other consultation, your GP's service may be directly billed to Medicare or you can claim a Medicare rebate. The Commonwealth Government pays the pharmacist to visit your home.



TAADIS

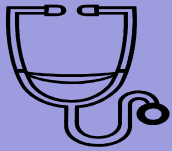
Illawarra residents with type 2 diabetes can expect improved care thanks to T.A.A.D.I.S., an information management system that has been developed by the Division of General Practice in collaboration with Illawarra Area Health Service's Diabetes Service.

T.A.A.D.I.S. (which stands for The Automated Accessible Diabetes Information System) enables patients, their GP, clinicians at the Illawarra Diabetes Service (dietitian, podiatrist, diabetes educator) and the patient's diabetes Specialist to view the patient's diabetes results via a secure web site to monitor how well diabetes is being controlled.

The system enables improved communication between all health care providers involved in a patient's diabetes care. GPs are informed about the care being provided by other health professionals to their patients and can make referrals electronically to the Diabetes Service. Diabetes Service clinicians and Specialists can view test results and use this information to help them plan care and education.

It is anticipated that access to their records will help patients to feel more in control of their diabetes and encourage self-management of their health.

Any person with type 2 diabetes who lives in the Illawarra is welcome to enrol in the program. Interested people should approach their GP or contact the Diabetes Project Officer at the Illawarra Division of General Practice on **4226 7052**.



Health Tips Annual Health Assessments

Your GP can provide a comprehensive annual health assessment for you if you are aged 75 years and over (55 years and over if you are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent) and living at home. This service is particularly useful if you have a number of medical problems or health practitioners involved in the management of your care, and can provide you with a personalised record to keep on hand when visiting your GP or other health professionals.

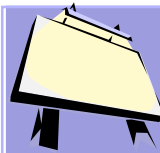
The assessment includes your past and present medical illnesses, nutrition, emotional wellbeing, mobility status, home environment, carers involved, and medication review, as well as reviewing your height, weight and blood pressure. Your GP might visit you at home to conduct the assessment, or may have a nurse or other health professional conduct the assessment on their behalf, in which case a full report is made to your GP and your GP will call you in to the surgery for a follow-up appointment to discuss your assessment.



A copy of your assessment can be made for you to keep in a safe place at home, making it available for medical attention at the house if necessary. You can also take your health assessment report to other doctors, going on holidays, or even when going to an aged care facility or hospital.

A health assessment is only conducted with your consent after your GP or the visiting nurse or other health professional has explained its purpose with you, and how the information is going to be used to manage your health needs.

Dr GA PURIS
Member of the Community Consultative
Committee



Community Billboard

WANTED!

Expressions of interest from community members to form an Illawarra support group for separation and suicide, particularly male suicide.

Please contact Janice Samways at the Division on 4226 7052 before 31 October if you would like to be involved.

WANTED!

Your say! This is your forum and we would like to hear from you. We welcome your contributions - letters, articles, and community tips in fact anything that might be of benefit to your local community.



Please send your contributions to The Editor, House Call Newsletter, Illawarra Division of General Practice, PO Box 1198, South Coast Mail Centre, 2521.

Illawarra Division of General Practice Community Consultative Committee

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