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Headline News

Launch of e-learning package to support 10997

AGPN, in partnership with the Royal College of Nursing Australia and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, are pleased to announce the launch of the 'e-learning training package to support Medicare Item 10997'.

The modules can be accessed on the RCNA 3LP website at the following web link www.3lp.rcna.org.au/10997 and following the instructions on the front page under Getting Started. You do not need to be a member of RCNA to access the modules.

The package consists of a prerequisite foundation module and a series of disease-specific modules that cover the topic areas of arthritis, asthma, cancer, coronary heart disease, dementia and diabetes. A new Kidney health module is under development and due for inclusion into the package in the near future.

The package has been accredited to the following standards:

- Competency Standards for Nurses in General Practice (ANF 2006)
- Competency Standards Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council
- Competency Standards associated with Community Services Training Package CHC08
- Australian Quality Training Framework compliant

The package will be available **free of charge** until 31st August 2009, after which time a charge will be levied.

<http://www.generalpracticenursing.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=39188>

"AGPN acknowledges the financial support of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing"

Future of the National Divisions Nursing in General Practice

The May federal budget outlined a decision by the government to combine funding for all allied health and nursing scholarship and support programs, and to tender the administration of this funding to no more than two organisations. This includes the funding for the national divisions NiGP Program.

Shortly after the budget announcement, the minister wrote to AGPN and SBOs advising us that the current NiGP contracts will be extended until 30th December 2009, during which time discussions regarding the future of the program beyond this date will be held.

AGPN has since held a number of meetings with representatives from DoHA and the minister's office to discuss the focus of the NiGP program from June - December 2009, and our vision for the future of the program beyond this time in line with the recommendations outlined in the NiGP Futures Paper, submitted to the department earlier this year.

Briefings have also been provided to the General Practice Network Leadership Group, seeking their input. AGPN will continue to work closely with the department and the minister's office over the next few weeks, and will provide advice to the network on an ongoing basis.

Introduction to General Practice and Orientation Program for Nurses New to General Practice

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing has funded the Australian General Practice Network to develop an Introduction to General Practice Program and a National Orientation Program for Nurses New to General Practice. Both programs will be completed at the end of June 2009.

Introduction to General Practice Program has been targeted to nurses who have maintained their registration and will provide nurses with the skills and confidence to seek employment within the primary health care setting in general practice. The program will be rolled out through divisions utilising local speakers over a 1.5 days or 3 X 3 hour sessions. The program consists of 6 modules including:

- Introduction to Nursing in General Practice
- General Practice Business
- Professional Practice Standards
- The Role of the Practice Nurse
- Applying for a Practice Nurse Position
- Where to from here

The Introduction to General Practice Program attracts 9 RCNA Continuing Nurse Education (CNE) points as part of RCNA's Life Long Learning program (3LP).

The Introduction to General Practice Program will be hosted on the AGPN Nursing in General Practice Website.

Orientation Program for Nurses New to General Practice has been designed for nurses who are new to the general practice environment within the first 6-12 months of employment. The National Orientation Program will provide nurses new to general practice with the knowledge and baseline skills they need to deliver high quality and safe health care services.

The program will be delivered under the following headings:

- Professional practice
- Collaborative practice
- Provision of clinical practice
- Management of clinical care

to complement the Competency Standards for Nurses in General Practice.

The Orientation Program will be coordinated by the NiGP SBO network and delivered as a two day workshop. An online program will be available for nurses who are unable to attend a face to face workshop. The program consists of 13 presentations including:

- Primary Health Care and Health Care Systems (General Practice Environment)
- Nursing Standards, Competencies and Guidelines
- Continuing Professional Development
- Clinical Assessment and Health Checks
- Triage
- Wound Management
- Immunisation
- Accreditation
- Infection Control
- Maintenance of Equipment
- Information Management in General Practice
- Chronic Disease Management
- Health Promotion in General Practice

A package has been developed for the Orientation Program for Nurses New to General Practice including presenters' background information; PowerPoint presentations and students course notes.

The Orientation Program for Nurses New to General Practice attracts 15 RCNA Continuing Nurse Education (CNE) points as part of RCNA's Life Long Learning program (3LP).

The online Orientation Program for Nurses New to General Practice will be hosted on the AGPN Nursing in General Practice Website.

For further information on these programs contact Toni Rice, Nurse Program Officer at trice@agpn.com.au

Domestic Violence Referral Points Project

The current national rollout of the training program ***Recognise and Respond to Domestic and Family Violence in rural and remote regions across Australia concludes at the end of June 2009.***

The final Domestic Violence workshop is scheduled in Darwin NT on 10 – 11th June 2009.

Registrations for the on-line training have closed.

FaHCSIA and the Department of Health and Ageing are currently reviewing the program, and examining the need to provide further training programs on an ongoing basis.

Practice nurses and Aboriginal Health Workers from eligible practices who have been unable to access the workshops but are interested in attending any future workshops please contact Julie Porritt on 02 6228 0800 or jporritt@agpn.com.au at the earliest.

For more information on the training program click the link below:

<http://www.generalpracticenursing.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=33497>



AGPN National Forum

Claiming the Space is this year's theme for the Australian General Practice Network Forum, being held from 4-7 November in Sydney.

Reflecting on the reform process that has dominated the health sector in the past twelve months and its impact on the Divisions of General Practice Network, keynote speakers include Professor David Colin-Thomé, National Director for Primary Care at the Department of Health, United Kingdom and Dr Mukesh Haikerwal, Commissioner, National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission.

A comprehensive program, including several papers from representatives of divisions, will illustrate the diversity of activities conducted throughout the Network.

The Minister for Health, Nicola Roxon has been invited to address the AGPN Forum, as has the Shadow Minister for Health, Peter Dutton.

Registration and the call for abstracts for the AGPN Forum open on Monday 18 May. Network members are encouraged to register early to take advantage of the deals available. Information on early bird registration, accommodation options and the current program are available at the AGPN Forum website <http://www.gpnetworkforum.com.au>

AGPN is also seeking sponsors and exhibitors for this event. All inquiries should be directed to Trisha Wong, AGPN Events Manager, 02 6228 0835; twong@agpn.com.au

DVD: NiGP – it's a choice

General Practice Queensland has distributed the copies of the DVD NiGP – it's a choice to all the SBOs, to be distributed to all the divisions of general practice. The DVD NiGP – it's a choice has been produced by the Queensland Provincial Working group.

The DVD can be used as a promotional resource. For any questions related to the DVD please contact General Practice Queensland on NiGPDVD@gpql.com.au

Other News

Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes Program

The Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes Program continues to gain momentum as a number of divisions and private facilitators commence the delivery of Lifestyle Modification Programs (LMPs).

Practice nurses have taken on a range of roles in supporting the program, including case finding using clinical audit software to identify patients with risk factors such as smoking, overweight and impaired glucose tolerance. Recall letters are being sent to these patients with a copy of the AUSDRISK tool. Patients then receive a follow up phone call a week or two later, and are encouraged to make an appointment for a health check or item 713.

Practice nurses are also assisting GPs with health checks and patient screening using the AUSDRISK. Currently the health check item numbers 717, 710 and 713 are the only referral pathways into subsidised LMPs and practice nurses have clear roles in assisting GPs with these item numbers.

Another role in which the practice nurse is actively supporting the program is by facilitating patient referrals to LMPs and assisting GPs to determine which LMP is most appropriate for the patient. Many practice nurses support the GP by taking the patient measurements required for the completion of the GP Referral Form.

One of the key roles is the actual delivery of LMPs and currently around 30% of LMP facilitators for the Reset your life program are practice nurses.

And similar to a range of other prevention and self management initiatives, practice nurses are becoming actively involved in this program through opportunistic interventions where they are counselling patients on lifestyle risk factors and behaviour change while undertaking other procedures. Practice nurses opportunistically identifying patients who may be eligible for referrals to LMPs and asking them to complete an AUSDRISK as part of the consultation.

Further information on the Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes Program is available from the AGPN website at <http://www.agpn.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=35338>.

Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program (MHNiP)

The Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program is currently engaging over 300 mental health nurses across approximately 250 eligible organisations such as general practices, divisions of general practice, private psychiatry practices and Aboriginal Medical Services.

Organisations that have either engaged a nurse or are considering engaging a mental health nurse under this program should consider that the deadline for the credentialing of nurses is 31st December 2009. After that date all nurses engaged in MHNiP must be credentialed with the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses. It should be noted that the credentialing process takes a number of weeks and should not be left beyond October. Mental Health Nurses requiring more information or assistance in navigating the credentialing process are urged to contact the College to ensure they are on track in reaching their credentialing status. The Department has warned that there will be no further extension to the 31st December deadline.

For assistance with credentialing enquiries please contact Marilyn Gendek at the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses on 02 6285 1078 / 1300 667 079 or marilyn.gendek@acmhn.org

CareSearch

CareSearch an Australian online resource that promotes the evidence-based practice of palliative care, and provides good quality, practical, up-to-date information and resources.

CareSearch provides information written especially for GPs to help in the management of palliative care patients in the community. These pages have recently been updated and revised, and now include information on:

- patients needing palliative care
- managing symptoms
- making it work in your practice
- the dying patient
- following up the bereaved
- professional development.

There are also pages written especially for consumers; patients, their carers, family, friends and the wider community. Information can be found on 'about palliative care', 'living with illness', 'how to care', 'at the end' and 'bereavement, grief and loss'.

Go online and have a look. Refer colleagues, patients and their families to information that can be downloaded and read later, given out to initiate discussion, or used directly for clinical practice.

There are a variety of information pieces available for the palliative care community including brochures, fact sheets and bookmarks

The resources are available at; www.caresearch.com.au

Kidney Health Week

With one in three Australians at increased risk of kidney disease the need for people to keep their blood pressure down to reduce the risk of damaging their kidneys is a major issue in the battle against Chronic Kidney Disease in Australia.

Kidney Health Week was officially launched in Canberra on Wednesday 26 May 2009 by the Governor General Quentin Bryce, Patron in Chief of Kidney Health Australia.

The Kidney Health Week is being held from 24 May to 30 May 2009 with the aim to raise awareness of Chronic Kidney Disease, with specific messaging around controlling blood pressure.

For more information about the Kidney Health Week click link below;

<http://www.kidney.org.au/NewsEvents/KidneyHealthWeek/tabid/648/Default.aspx>

Cancer Learning Evaluation Survey

In our last few editions we introduced you to the new Cancer Learning website;

<http://www.cancerlearning.gov.au/>

The current Cancer Learning project is scheduled for completion in June 2009 and needs input from the users of the website to provide support for its sustainability. The evaluation survey takes about 5-10 minutes to complete. Cancer Australia is encouraging feedback about the website, the resources available on it and any comments or suggestions you may have regarding how it could be shaped to better suit your needs.

The survey can be accessed at: <http://www.cancerlearning.gov.au/feedback/>

Courtesy of AGPN Mid-Week Facts:

Division staffer finalist in HESTA Nursing Awards

Congratulations to David Copley from General Practice Network South (in South Australia) on being a finalist in Australia's prestigious HESTA Australian Nursing Awards. David was one of three finalists in the Graduate Nurse of the Year category and was nominated for the award because of his role in developing an innovative and ground breaking approach to Aboriginal Mental Health Services and a Mental Health awareness program for Aboriginal teenagers.

The HESTA Australian Nursing Awards celebrates the skill and achievements of Australia's nurses, midwives, personal care attendants and assistants in nursing. David Copley's achievements were made as a graduate nurse in the year after he received his Bachelor of Nursing from Flinders University, South Australia. David, an Aboriginal man of Kurna descent, worked in the disability field for 18 years, before returning to study to become a registered nurse. For his undergraduate research project David investigated Aboriginal Mental Health. After completing his Bachelor of Nursing he continued studying, becoming the first Aboriginal Nurse in South Australia to complete a Graduate Diploma - Mental Health Nursing.

"We talk about 1 in 5 people having a mental health issue but for Aboriginal people, depending on where you are or which community you are looking at, it's more like 1 in 3, or even 1 in 2," David said.

"General Practice Network South had a position for an Aboriginal Mental Health Shared Care Clinician, they had faith in my ideas, dreams and concepts for Mental Health Services for Aboriginal people (even though I was only newly graduated). We set up the service, using a combination of cultural concepts combined with modern Mental Health techniques and with their support we have established a service that is having positive outcomes."

Today the service provides mental health services to patients through two Aboriginal Family Clinics in Adelaide's Southern Suburbs. During his graduate year (through a partnership with General Practice Network South and Southern Adelaide Health Services) David also co-designed and co-facilitated the H.O.P.E. Program (Helping Ourselves Through Personal Education) a Mental Health Awareness Program specifically aimed at young Aboriginal people aged 12 -17.

David's success in making it to the finals serves as an example of the opportunity available to promote the achievements of nurses working in general practice and more broadly in the network through the annual HESTA Australian Nursing Awards, with a total prize pool of \$25,000. HESTA is one of Australia's largest superannuation funds, drawing members from the health and community services sector.

Courtesy of Nursing Matters:

PN immunisation course evaluation update

The NiGP program at GP NSW has partnered with Dr Liz Halcomb from the University of Western Sydney (UWS) to develop a research project which aims to explore the correlation between RNs completing the Immunisation Course for Registered Nurses course through The College of Nursing, and the immunisation rates of their practice. The research will also explore the demographic and professional characteristics of course participants, their knowledge and attitudes toward immunisation and the impact of the course on their clinical practice.

The initial 50 places have been purchased and filled for PNs from practices with immunisation rates of less than 90%. Another 50 positions will soon be purchased for all other PNs. All PNs wishing to undertake the course and who accept a funded position will be expected to participate in the study. This will include a pre and post course survey, and agreement to undertake any extra follow up during or after the course via mail, email or phone call. For the study to work to its best potential, the project team need commitment from both the General Practice Network/Division and the PNs to participate in the study.

The research has now been approved by the UWS ethics committee but we are waiting on formal notification.

Chronic disease study for practice nurses

Do you use the chronic disease items numbers in your practice?

A study funded by the University of Western Sydney and endorsed by the Australian Practice Nurses Association are looking for practice nurses to participate in an exciting study to evaluate chronic disease management by general practice nurses.

Nurse participants will be asked to complete a short survey and keep a record of patients for whom they provide care related to chronic disease over ten working days. If practice nurses choose to participate, their clients will be asked if they would like to participate in a survey of their satisfaction with practice nurse chronic disease management. Additionally, the GPs in the practice will be invited to participate in an interview about the role of the nurse in chronic disease management. Practice nurses are encouraged to consider participation regardless of whether they think their clients or GP(s) would be interested in participating.

To find more out about this study or to register your interest in participating, please contact Dr Elizabeth Halcomb on 02 4620 3344 or e.halcomb@uws.edu.au

Courtesy of Royal College of Nursing Australia (RCNA):

Rural Faculty update

It has been an exiting few months for the new Rural Nursing and Midwifery Faculty, previously Australian Rural Nurses and Midwives (ARNM). Members of the Rural Faculty have benefited from a project developed initially by ARNM and transferred to RCNA in February 2009 following the merger.

The instigation of the project, *Learning how to drive the internet: increasing the level of computer literacy in the rural and midwifery workforce*, is a training program designed to increase computer literacy in the rural nursing and midwifery workforce. This program is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA).

Over 700 expressions of interest were received by the Rural Faculty from prospective participants and, due to overwhelming demand; the faculty will be offering this program for a nominal fee to those who were unable to secure DoHA funded positions.

For further information please contact Jackie Poyser, Project Officer on 02 6215 8341 or jackiep@rcna.org.au

Project Update – APEC workshops

RCNA's APEC program is well underway with Brisbane, Sydney, Hobart and Melbourne workshops already successfully completed.

Through APEC, an education provider can endorse their activities on behalf of RCNA. Attendance at an APEC workshop also entitles and organisation to allocate RCNA Continuing Nurse Education (CNE) points to activities, advertise events on RCNA's website and use RCNA's logo on promotional material.

To register for the workshop visit; www.rcna.org.au/development/apec

Contact the Editor

Information in this newsletter is for the use and benefit of all members of SBOs and Divisions, so please pass it on, and recycle the whole, or parts, of this publication to your members with due acknowledgements to AGPN.

If SBOs, Divisions and other readers have information for, or comments on, AGPN Nursing News please contact Beta Chakraverty on 02 62280 800 or email bchakraverty@agpn.com.au