



Welcome to the winter edition of Practice Pulse the newsletter for Practice Managers and Practice Staff.

On page 2 you will find an extremely interesting article on 'Conflict resolution in the workplace'. Unfortunately, conflict does arise and the sooner this is addressed the better the outcome will be for all concerned. Kelli Porter attended a comprehensive workshop regarding this issue so please contact her if you need guidance.

The GPD Team now has a new information manager, Suzanne Velarde, who can advise and support your information management needs, including development or software and templates. Please call anytime for assistance or advice.

Contents

- DVA:** Changes to VAP payments
AMA: Family Doctor Week
 Conflict Resolution in the Workplace
NPS: Common Colds need Common Sense.
Medicare: Prescription Shopping Program

Fremantle GP Network Events

August 8 Safety in the Workplace

August 26 City to Surf Fun Run

Please see Page 4 for Details

Veterans' Access Payment (VAP) Item numbers MT98 and MT99

General Practitioners registered under the LMO Scheme may claim a supplementary VAP payment for consultations provided to eligible veterans and dependants.

The arrangements for VAP changed on 1 May 2007. The DVA item numbers MT98 and MT99 now reflect the Medicare Bulk Billing Incentive item numbers. I.e. the criteria for payment will reflect the arrangements for the MBS items numbers 10990 and item number 10991.

The current rebates:

MT98	\$9.40
MT99	\$6.20

For claims with a date of service prior to 1 May 2007 the previous rates will apply.

Visit www.dva.gov.au for further information.

July 22 to 28 2007 AMA Family Doctor Week

The goal of the AMA's Family Doctor Week is to promote the importance of general practice in our communities and how central General Practitioners are to the health and well being of Australians.

Please view the resources available to Practices on the AMA website www.ama.com.au.

To order posters and other material please contact: Wendy Lorincz on lorincz@ama.com.au or, telephone 02 6270 5426.

Posters are also available from Fremantle GP Network. Contact Suzanne Badham on 9319 0555 to order your copy.

Conflict Resolution in the Workplace

Most workplaces experience conflict amongst staff at some stage. Conflict can arise whenever there is a perceived difference (whether real or not) between the interests of the parties involved.

Causes of conflict at work can include:

- Perceived unfair treatment
- Personal relationships and personality clashes
- Power and control exercised inappropriately
- Battles for scarce resources
- Time constraints
- Differing values or beliefs
- Lack of policies and procedures for dealing with grievances

A Practice Manager can help reduce conflict by establishing a code of conduct for employees that details what is acceptable behaviour in the workplace; by clearly communicating the expectations of the organisation; and by implementing a system for dealing with any workplace grievances.

How to address Workplace Conflict

Conflict in the workplace should not be ignored, as this can often cause conflict to escalate. The best ways to deal with conflict situations are to:

1. Acknowledge that conflict exists

Employers should ensure that they always acknowledge the existence of conflict by talking to the parties involved and taking some action to resolve it.

2. Choose an appropriate time and place to discuss the issue

Conflict is generally best dealt with by getting the parties to the conflict together, discussing the issues and generating potential solutions to the conflict. It is better to meet with the parties together rather than individually to avoid any misunderstandings. Ensure that you meet in an appropriate, neutral location, preferably away from their specific work areas and other employees. Set ground rules for how the matter will be dealt with.

3. Identify the issues causing the problem

Allow each party to clearly state the problem that is causing the conflict. It is important that each party has a clear understanding of the other person's position and issues of concern. Make sure where possible that the information provided is supported by facts and data, not just opinions.

4. Explore the options for resolution

Generate all of the possible solutions that will resolve the conflict. Encouraging the parties to provide the solutions generally results in a better outcome, which they are committed to implementing. The parties should be encouraged to focus on both their needs and views and those of the other party involved. The focus should be on generating potential win-win solutions.

5. Negotiate and agree on a resolution

The final step is to negotiate and agree on the best possible solution for resolving the conflict and preventing it from reoccurring in the future. This requires the parties to evaluate all the possible solutions generated in the previous step and agree on a plan that meets everyone's needs. Developing and documenting an agreed plan is recommended to ensure that there are no further misunderstandings or conflicts in the future. The plan should set out specific issues, actions and goals that have been agreed; any agreed modifications to behaviour or conduct; and how the success of the agreed plan will be monitored.

The *Workplace Relations Act* 1996 (WR Act) now includes a model Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) that applies to disputes about entitlements under the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard (AFPCS); terms of workplace agreement; application of awards and workplace determinations; and minimum entitlements for meal breaks, public holiday and parental leave. The model DRP:

- Encourages employer and employees to resolve disputes in the workplace
- Introduces greater flexibility in resolving disputes by allowing parties to determine the best forum to resolve them
- Provides for an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process if the dispute is not resolved at the workplace

A copy of the *Workplace Relations Act* 1996 is available from www.airc.gov.au (under procedures and legislation).

Remember – conflict isn't always negative. It can facilitate better communication, create opportunities for change and have positive consequences.



Can We Help?

Please contact Kelli, Suzanne B, Suzanne V or Gae from the General Practice Development Team at Fremantle GP Network on 9319 0555 to find out how we can assist your Practice.



National Prescribing Service Limited

Common colds need common sense, not antibiotics

Tear-off 'Symptomatic Management Pads' available for patients

Prescribing antibiotics for self-limiting conditions can reinforce some patients' erroneous beliefs that antibiotics are 'cure-alls' for infections. The National Prescribing Service has developed several patient materials to support doctors to explain to consumers the most effective way to treat the symptoms of colds and flu without using antibiotics.

One of these resources is the Symptomatic Management Pad for Acute URTIs and Acute Bronchitis. These pads are extremely effective in assuring the patient that the best treatment options have been considered to assist them to feel better while the body's own defences defeat the respiratory tract illness.

You can download Common Colds Campaign materials from the NPS website at www.nps.org.au/healthpro > Topics and Resources > Products > Patient materials. Alternatively call Lorna Hurst on 9319 0555 to obtain supplies of the pads.

Make Health and Safer Choices

A new book launched on 28 May by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, Senator Brett Mason, aims to help shoppers decipher the meaning of food labels. See: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing>



Medicare—Prescription Shopping Program Prescription Shopping Information Service

If a doctor suspects a patient of getting medicine in excess of medical need, they can call Medicare Australia's Prescription Shopping Information Service. The doctor must be registered to use this service; registration forms can be downloaded from Medicare Australia's website.

Once registered a doctor can call the Information Service 24-hours a day, seven-days a week on 1800 631 181 and:

- find out if their patient has been identified under the Prescription Shopping Program
- receive information on the amount and type of PBS medicine recently supplied to that patient

Medicare Australia has the authority to disclose without consent, specific and limited PBS information to a doctor about their patients who may be getting PBS medicine in excess of medical need.

For additional information please contact Medicare Australia www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

Wednesday 8 August 2007

6.30—8.30pm

An interactive workshop for Practice Managers, Practice Nurses and Front Desk Staff presented by a member of the Police Crime Prevention Unit.



As we are expecting a large number of attendees we would appreciate your early response to enable us to confirm the local venue.

Please contact Suzanne Badham on 9319 0555 or email sueb@frdgp.com.au to register your interest.



PROFILE ON
Robyn Atkinson, Practice Manager
Melville Family Health Centre

How long have you worked at Melville Family Health Centre?

7 1/2 years—5 as Practice Manager.

What is your role at Melville Family Health Centre?

To oversee the general running of the Practice. We have medical, chiropractic, physiotherapy, dental, nursing and psychology practices under one roof.

What is your next planned project?

Trying to erect the super duper tent I bought recently!

How do you intend to celebrate the successful erection of the tent? Swim to Rotto, walk the Bibbulmun Track?

After reading the confusing instructions I will probably need a nice glass of wine (or 2).

What famous person would you like to sit next to at the next workshop you attend? And why?

Rudy Giuliani. He was mayor of New York for 2 terms. I am currently reading his book on leadership. He is an extraordinary man who has accomplished so much and lead the nation through 9/11.

Where would you like to go on your next holiday?

India—I have always wanted to see the Taj Mahal.

Where are you actually going on your next holiday?

Camping at Ayres Rock and Kings Canyon.

What makes you laugh?

My staff and practitioners. It is a happy place to work. My staff are gorgeous girls and do a great job!

What/who is your favourite

- Car -** Nissan Maxima
- Author -** Don't have one
- Shop-** Marks & Spencers in London
- Drink-** Champagne

And finally, if you were shipwrecked on a deserted island name what/who you would like with you.

- 3 people**
my husband, Jamie Oliver & singer John Mayer
- 2 foods**
chocolate and potato crisps
- 2 books**
a book on Edible Plants and How to Build a Raft!
- 1 Pet**
Flipper

WHO ARE WE PROFILING NEXT??

Well that is up to you!

Please call Kelli, Gae or Suzanne Badham to nominate a work colleague or to nominate yourself.

Fremantle GP Network Events

August 8
Safety in the Workplace

A workshop for Practice Managers, Practice Staff and Practice Nurses.
 6.00pm - 8.30pm
 Venue—to be advised

This extremely popular event will be presented by the Police Crime Prevention Unit. As we are expecting a larger than usual number of attendees we would appreciate your early response to enable us to confirm the venue.

August 26
City to Surf Fun Run

GPs, Practice Staff, Practice Nurses, friends and families all welcome!

For further information on these events or to request specific education contact Gae, Kelli, or Suzanne on 9319 055

New IM Officer—Suzanne Velarde



Suzanne Velarde has taken on the Information Management role in addition to roles in Publicity and Business Development. If your practice needs any advice or support for Information Management please do not hesitate to give Suzanne a call on 9319 0555 or email suzannev@frdgp.com.au.

Fremantle GP Network constantly strives to improve the quality and range of services to our practices and welcomes positive feedback and complaints. We invite you to send your comments to reception@frdgp.com.au