

Hawkesbury GP Consultation Feedback Report

Exploring and addressing the needs of GPs within the Hawkesbury – a project supported by the Hawkesbury Doctors Network and Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement and gratitude is given to Dr Trudie Rombola, Dr David Foley and Dr Rory Webb for their efforts in conducting consultations with their peer General Practitioners in the Hawkesbury local government area.

Recognition is also given to those GPs in the Hawkesbury who willingly gave up their time to discuss their needs as a part of the consultation process.

Contact Details

For more information or permission to use any part of this document, please contact:

Stakeholder Governance and Engagement Team

P: 02 4708 8100

E: engagement@nbmphn.com.au

Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network

Wentworth Healthcare Limited,

Blg BR, Level 1, Suite 1,

Locked Bag 1797, Penrith NSW 2751

Published December 2017

www.nbmphn.com.au/HawkesburyConsultation2017

Key Messages

This report provides an overview of the key findings of a *Hawkesbury GP consultation process* undertaken from September 2016 to March 2017. It includes a snapshot of:

- local needs, issues and gaps in services for patients identified by doctors in the Hawkesbury region
- ideas for improving the delivery of patient care through the health continuum of General Practice, hospital and community settings
- response from Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network (NBMPHN) on the matters raised including sources of additional support for GPs

Findings:

Eight key themes of need emerged from the consultations:

1. Building General Practice Services and Systems:

More than **one quarter** of GPs raised issues relating to integration and application of technology within their Practices.

2. Workforce Needs of General Practice:

More than **one third** mentioned recruitment, training and retention of staff as significant issues.

3. Continuing Professional Development:

More than **50 per cent** recognised a need for their own further education.

4. Acute Care Services Including Communication with the Hospital:

50 per cent raised issues such as their need for local hospital outpatient services, electronic discharge summaries and access to local specialists and services.

5. Care and Support for Vulnerable Patients:

Almost **three quarters** recognised vulnerable groups within their region requiring better primary healthcare support including the elderly, the very young, those without transport and those in financial difficulties.

6. Mental Health:

50 per cent felt that mental health access and support services were insufficient to meet the needs of patients within their Practices.

7. Advocacy for GPs:

40 per cent desired an opportunity to connect with local colleagues at least annually.

8. Local Community Needs:

Many local community needs were identified in addition to those mentioned above. The most common barriers for patient care GPs highlighted related to access to public transport and public health providers within the region.

Background

The Hawkesbury GP Consultation Project was initiated and implemented by Hawkesbury GPs and NBMPHN GP Advisory Committee (GPAC) members Dr Trudie Rombola, Dr David Foley and Dr Rory Webb. The project was supported by quarantined funding from the closure of the Hawkesbury-Hills Division of General Practice, designated to specifically support Hawkesbury GPs.

GPAC advises the Board of Wentworth Healthcare, provider of NBMPHN, on recommended strategies to address region-wide issues facing GPs, whilst also considering the unique needs and concerns of each local community. This consultation process was designed to provide Hawkesbury GPs with the opportunity to share their opinions, problems, concerns and possible solutions through a peer-to-peer process and enable effective representation for GPs in the Hawkesbury region.

Consultation Process

All 25 Hawkesbury Practices were contacted during the consultation process and 84 per cent (21 Practices) were visited, with 50 per cent (41 GPs) of the area's 81 GPs directly consulted.

During the one-on-one, face-to-face interviews, GPs were asked about their **Practice, clinical, community and individual needs**. They were also encouraged to provide suggestions on how they could be supported in the future to address areas of concern raised.

The GP consultation responses were recorded and aggregated by the NBMPHN Stakeholder Governance and Engagement team. This report highlights the issues raised and the areas of support requested by GPs within the eight themes of need that emerged from the consultations.

Importantly, within this report, and direct to the GPs who were consulted, NBMPHN has responded to feedback and provided information and further points of support for GPs in relation to specific enquiries that have been raised through this project.



www.nbmphn.com.au/HawkesburyConsultation2017

Next Steps

The consultation process has provided NBMPHN with the following strategies to support not only Hawkesbury GPs, but GPs throughout the region in the future, including:

An effective consultation model:

- This process has informed NBMPHN of the importance of peer-to-peer consultation, as the best means of identifying local GP needs. The outcomes of the consultations, as presented in a report format, are a starting point in conveying the results and appropriate responses of this direct GP feedback. It is possible this model of GP consultation may be used in other NBMPHN local Government areas.

Identified needs are informing strategic health planning:

- The valuable feedback provided by GPs is helping to inform NBMPHN about the specific primary care and population health needs of the Hawkesbury region. This will contribute towards strategic health planning for new services and future solutions tailored to meet these local needs.

Have your say – A great way to continue the process:

- It is envisaged that the consultation project and report are just the start of a continued engagement with Hawkesbury GPs. The section of this report titled **Your PHN** on pages 45-48 provides **'ways to have your say'** and also details key contacts within NBMPHN who can provide more specific information and assistance in helping to support and build General Practice in the Hawkesbury.

Table of Contents

Key Messages	3
Findings	3
Background	4
Consultation Process	4
Next Steps	5









Theme 1: Building General Practice Services & Systems 9

Care Coordination	9
After Hours Pharmacies	9
Home Medication Review Availability	10
NDIS Support	10
Orthopaedic Advice and Services for GPs	10
Palliative Care Support	11
Register, Recalls & Reminders	11
Digital Health	11
Clinical Software Options and Advice	11
My Health Record (MHR) Support	11
New Technologies	12
Quality Care	12
Accreditation Support	12
Chronic Disease Management Assistance for Practice Nurses	12
Data Quality Improvement/Clinical Audits Support	12
Defibrillator Requirements for Practices	13
HealthPathways Assistance with Local Referral Options	14
IT Support	14
Pap Smears	14
PenCAT Training	14
Practice Incentive Program (PIP) and Service Incentive Program (SIP) Eligibility	15
Services in the Community	15
Wound Dressing Support After Hours	16



Theme 2: Workforce Needs of General Practice 19

Attracting, Recruiting & Retaining Staff	19
Allied Health Providers	19
GPs	20
GP Registrars in Training	20
Registrar Orientation and Support	20
Locums	21
Practice Nurses	21
Planning for the Future	21
Grant Opportunities for General Practices	21
Practice Transitioning Support – e.g. Expansion, Amalgamation	21
Preparation for RACGP Fellowship Exams	21

	Theme 3: Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	23
	CPR	24
	Financial Matters eg. Locums, Tax	24
	Implanon Training	24
	MBS Changes	24
	Medico-legal Issues	24
	Paediatric Patients with ADHD	25
	Theme 4: Acute Care Services including Communication with the Hospital	27
	Digital Health	28
	Theme 5: Care and Support for Vulnerable Patients	31
	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community	31
	Closing the Gap (CTG)	31
	Aboriginal Medical Service	31
	Older Persons	32
	Migrant Refugees	32
	People Affected by Domestic Violence	32
	Services and Information	33
	Theme 6: Mental Health	35
	ATAPS Access	35
	Mental Health Website	35
	Mental Health Skills Training	36
	Theme 7: Advocacy for GPs	39
	Allied Health Costs	39
	GP Wellbeing and Support	39
	Medicare Changes	39
	Public Health Issue Updates	40
	Theme 8: Local Community Needs	43
	Your PHN	45
	Ways to Connect	45
	It's Your PHN – Why Not Get Involved?	45
	Ways To Have Your Say	46
	NBMPHN GP Advisory Committee (GPAC)	46
	Hawkesbury Doctors Network	46
	The Who's Who of NBMPHN Key Contacts	47



Theme 1: Building General Practice Services and Systems

The main concerns identified related to coordination of care for patients and developing systems that supported care by building the Practice capacity and capability. Queries were raised about GP access to specialist advice and services such as home medication reviews; understanding the NDIS and connecting patients to this scheme; Practice staff recall and reminder systems, clinical audits; and clinical pathways for GP referrals.

GPs asked for the following local support and guidance:

For information and support tailored to your individual needs contact:

Manager, General Practice Support Services

(see page 47)

Care Coordination

After Hours Pharmacies

GPs raised the need for a local Hawkesbury pharmacy with extended opening hours.

NBMPHN feedback: We investigated opening hours of pharmacies in the region but unfortunately at this stage no pharmacies had the capacity to extend their after hours times to match the Hawkesbury After Hours GP Clinic. NBMPHN has After Hours Pharmacies brochures available for each local government area. All pharmacies listed in the Hawkesbury are open Saturdays and we have indicated those that open Sundays and Public Holidays. To order free brochures please visit:



www.nbmphn.com.au/AfterHoursToolkit

The National Health Services Directory also lists pharmacists. The Directory is located on the homepage of NBMPHN's website:




www.nbmphn.com.au

Home Medication Review Availability


NBMPHN has confirmed the following accredited pharmacist does home medication reviews in the Hawkesbury and covers all areas in the Nepean Blue Mountains region.

Miraz Ahmed Nasir – 0430 810 750

However, there may be additional local pharmacists also willing to conduct Home Medication Reviews. Hawkesbury pharmacies can be downloaded from the NBMPHN website at:

 www.nbmphn.com.au/HawkesburyPharmacies

or you can search online at:

 www.healthdirect.gov.au

NDIS Support

NBMPHN's NDIS Coordinator is available to meet with individual GPs and/or attend Practice meetings to field queries and bring you up to speed on how to support patients. Additionally, information about the NDIS is located on the NBMPHN website including the information sheet: *Information about the NDIS for GPs and health professionals*:

 www.nbmphn.com.au/GP/NDIS

Other ideas put forward to help inform and support GPs include:

- a NDIS Evidence template on Best Practice/MedicalDirector
- running lunch-time webinars
- distributing a Q & A Fact Sheet
- developing a NDIS journey visual chart. This could include the patient's journey through the NDIS and who would support them at the different stages.

Orthopaedic Advice and Services for GPs

At present in the Hawkesbury you can contact your local orthopaedic surgeon. There is no fracture clinic at Hawkesbury Hospital. Nepean Hospital has made available to all GPs a GP Orthopaedic Advice Line. A trial of this Line was launched in March after NBMPHN responded to calls from GPs in the region for a more streamlined process of orthopaedic presentations/admissions through Nepean Hospital Emergency Department from General Practice. The Advice Line has been so successful it is continuing on a permanent basis.

GP ORTHOPAEDIC ADVICE LINE

Details:
Phone 0437 593 160
9am-4pm
Monday to Friday

Speak to a Senior Orthopaedic Registrar/Fellow. If you don't get straight through (e.g. during operating times) please text the Line.

For more details see the March, May and December editions of *GP Grapevine*:
www.nbmphn.com.au/GPGrapevine

Palliative Care Support

- GPs can connect with and refer to the Palliative Care Home Support Packages Program also known as PEACH. The PEACH Program provides care packages to palliative patients, supporting them and their families and caregivers in the last days of their life in their own home. For information about PEACH and referral criteria visit:



www.swslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/peach/referral.html

- NBMPHN has recently commenced an End of Life Care (EoLC) Mapping Project. This project will identify the demand and unmet needs for EoLC in the region. The project will also develop a pathway model that can support future planning and commissioning of EoLC services for the NBMPHN region. The project also aims to increase understanding of Advance Care Directives (ACDs) and their use in current service provision. GPs and Practice Nurses are involved in the Project.
- NBMPHN staged a GP Palliative Approach Workshop in Springwood in mid November. The Workshop was delivered by a Nepean Hospital palliative care specialist and funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.



www.nbmphn.com.au/Events

Register, Recalls and Reminders Support

Your Practice Support Officer can offer staff training in register, recalls and reminder system development. We also offer resources on our website under General Practice Support:



www.nbmphn.com.au/PracticeSupport

Also see the RACGP 4th Edition Accreditation Standards:



www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/standards/standards4thedition/

Digital Health

Clinical Software Options and Advice

NBMPHN can facilitate your access to clinical software vendors and we can suggest a number of reputable companies who provide in-house training. NBMPHN can support your Practice staff to proficiently data cleanse and code your patient diagnoses which will assist with creating current register, recall and reminder systems.

My Health Record (MHR) Support

GPs asked for support with the Record including increasing capacity to upload radiology scans and pathology results.

NBMPHN feedback:

- The MHR team is available to visit Practices and train GPs and Practice support staff. NBMPHN is also working with hospitals in our region to increase the number of discharge summaries being uploaded to MHR. Hawkesbury Hospital does not currently have the IT capacity to work with MHR but NBMPHN is addressing this with St John of God.
- Advance Care Directives (ACD) can also be uploaded to the MHR by consumers. At this point GPs are not able to upload ACDs but they can be involved in the process by, for example, asking their patients whether they have developed a Directive and would they like to upload one. In the future the Department of Health will provide a generic ACD template for GPs to upload to MHR.
- At present MHR doesn't have pathology or medical imaging available. This will be rolled out nationally in 2018 and is continually developing its capability to support GPs and consumers.

New Technologies

NBMPHN can offer support for new digital health technologies through the Digital Health team. This includes:

- checking that the Practice has the appropriate certificates and Medicare identification to use My Health Record
- educating Practice staff on how to access MHR
- registering for e-PIP



www.nbmpnhn.com.au/GP/MyHealthRecord

Quality Care

Accreditation Support

NBMPHN can offer your Practice the following types of support to undertake accreditation or re-accreditation:

- An understanding of the RACGP 4th Edition Accreditation Standards
- Sample policies, procedures, updated standards, signage and documents
- Assistance with self-assessment software, infection control, triage and cold chain training
- Assistance with online self-assessment
- Mock accreditation surveys to prepare a Practice for the surveyor's visit

Chronic Disease Management Assistance for Practice Nurses

NBMPHN has a Practice Nurse Coordinator who can assist nurses in understanding the requirements under the MBS relating to chronic disease management.


Data Quality Improvement/Clinical Audits Support

NBMPHN has a Data Quality Improvement Program using the PenCAT software tool that is designed to support General Practice in proactively interrogating specific patient populations, including people with chronic disease, by utilising the data in the Practice's clinical software. It is based on one of the largest and most successful primary care improvement programs, the Australian Primary Care Collaborative.

Practices engaged with the Program, and other specific quality improvement activities such as the Cancer Screening Clinical Audit and Quality Improvement Program and COPD Collaborative, have the opportunity to receive a tailored overview of their Practice's population health needs in comparison to the rest of their region's population. These support activities also assist GPs to gain QI&CPD points, incentive payments and contribute towards quality improvement for accreditation. The activities have been well received, with GPs commenting that they find them a great motivator, particularly with the short program updates provided from members of the program team.

More information:


Data Quality Improvement Program:

 www.nbmphn.com.au/QualityImprovement

COPD Collaborative:


 www.nbmphn.com.au/GP/COPD

Cancer Screening Clinical Audit and QI Program (for bowel, breast and cervical cancer):

 www.nbmphn.com.au/GP/CancerScreening

Defibrillator Requirements for Practices

Currently it is recommended that a Practice has a defibrillator, however, it is not mandatory for Accreditation based on the RACGP 4th Edition Accreditation Standards:

 www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/standards/standards4thedition

A review of the draft 5th Edition Standards (due out later this year), indicates that a defibrillator will continue to be a recommended addition to a Practice, but will not be mandatory. We recommend checking this status once the new Standards are released. Visit:

 www.racgp.org.au/publications/ordering/standards/

“
A PHN visitor came and explained about (low) bowel screening uptake (in the Hawkesbury region). This was helpful and a good motivator. Short, focussed visits like this are good.
.....”

HealthPathways Assistance with Local Referral Options

HealthPathways is an online tool that guides GPs to local referral options while also supporting assessment and management decisions. It is used at the point of care, primarily for General Practitioners but it is also available to hospital specialists, nurses, allied health and other health professionals. It is effective at helping clinicians from all backgrounds to “be on the same page” for local health options.

The HealthPathways Program, a joint initiative between NBMPHN and Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD), is well underway with GPs engaged in a number of areas to develop, review and test a vast number of pathways. HealthPathways will be launched live in November 2017 and will be available to all GPs in the region.

For more information visit:

 www.nbmphn.com.au/HealthPathways

IT Support

We recommend that all GP Practices invest in the necessary IT service level agreements with a reputable IT support provider whom they can call on should the need arise. There are a number of local IT support providers, offering an array of support plans that can be tailored to the needs of your Practice from ad-hoc hourly rates to monthly maintenance plans and help-desk packages.


Pap Smears

GPs were interested to know the best way to exclude ineligible patients and those who decline screening tests.

NBMPHN feedback: Through your Practice clinical software system the Pen Clinical Audit Tool (CAT4) can identify patients ineligible for Pap smears based upon a hysterectomy recorded in the patient’s past medical history. Currently there is no field available in clinical software to identify patients who have declined cervical and other cancer screening tests. NBMPHN is in consultation now with Medical Director Clinical to request development of improved functions to record this information.

PenCAT Training

For in-Practice clinical audits and patient profiling, NBMPHN can provide the PenCAT suite of tools. Your Practice Support Officer can assist with training staff on how to use the tool and produce quarterly clinical audits using de-identified data to improve your prevention activities, chronic disease management and business optimisation.

 www.nbmphn.com.au/PenCAT


Practice Incentive Program (PIP) and Service Incentive Program (SIP) Eligibility

To qualify for the PIP, Practices must be accredited, or working towards accreditation, against the RACGP's Standards for General Practices. The intention of PIP is to recognise General Practices who provide comprehensive, quality care.

PIP payments are made to the whole Practice, in contrast to SIP, which are made to the individual provider of the service. SIP payments are associated with the completion of the diabetes annual cycle of care, completion of the asthma cycle of care, and with cervical screening performed on unscreened or under-screened women (no Pap smear in the previous four years). SIPs are paid in addition to the normal Medicare benefit for the particular service triggers by specific MBS item numbers. SIPs are paid quarterly in February, May, August and November.

Your Practice Support Officer can provide information, resources and assistance in data cleansing, coding and recalls to assist with PIP and SIP payments.

More information about PIP/SIP is available at:

 www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/services/medicare/practice-incentives-program?utm_id=9

Services in the Community

GPs reported they needed information about local community services to support specific health needs.

NBMPHN feedback: HealthPathways is currently being developed by NBMPHN, covering Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Penrith regions. It will provide a single source of accurate local support services for all primary healthcare issues. In the meantime the following links may be helpful:

Healthdirect – Find a Health Service (located on right hand side of NBMPHN's website homepage):

 www.healthdirect.gov.au

GPs asked for specific information about the availability of a sexual health clinic.

NEPEAN SEXUAL HEALTH AND HIV CLINIC

www.nbmlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/sexual-health

HOURS:

Monday

12.30pm – 7.30pm

Tuesday

9am – 3.30pm

MOW clinic

3.30pm – 5.30pm

Thursday

9am – 4.30pm

AFTER HOURS

CONTACT

INSTRUCTIONS

General Practitioner

Accident &

Emergency

Department

Sexual Health

Info Line:

1800 451 624

HIV Info Line:

1800 451 600


Gay Men's Info Line:

1800 009 448

PEP Info Line:

1800 737 669

Hawkesbury City Council Community Directory:

 www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/services/other-key-services/community-directory

NBMPHN's Community Health Referrals and Services webpage:

 www.nbmphn.com.au/CommunityHealth

Wound Dressing Support After Hours

NBMPHN's website provides a list of contact details for local community health centres including referral forms to access this type of service:

 www.nbmphn.com.au/CommunityHealth

Hawkesbury Community Health Centre:

Open Monday to Friday

Referral forms need to include the type of dressing required, urgency etc. Fax referrals: **4560 5713**

To speak to an intake officer phone: **4560 5714**

The alternative for wound care over the weekend is of course GPs, however, wound clinics do try to ensure that dressings last over the weekend.



Theme 2: Workforce Needs of General Practice

Hawkesbury GPs asked for help **attracting, recruiting, retaining and training GPs, registrars, locums, Practice Nurses and Allied Health providers**. Some GPs were also looking ahead to the future and seeking support for transitions such as expanding or amalgamating Practices, adjusting work hours and preparing for retirement. Those GPs still to complete their RACGP Fellowship exams (especially GP registrars and international medical graduates) requested support in preparation for this.

For information and support tailored to your individual needs contact:

Workforce Program Officer (see page 48)

Attracting, Recruiting and Retaining Staff:

Allied Health Providers

Practices can request that NBMPHN places an advertisement on its website regarding a job vacancy (e.g. GP, Allied Health, admin), buying/selling Practices, renting a room to Allied Health professionals etc. through the below link:



www.nbmphn.com.au/JobAds

Once NBMPHN approves the request, the ad will be visible on our website.:



www.nbmphn.com.au/Jobs

You may also benefit from visiting the Allied Health Professionals Australia (AHPA) website:



www.ahpa.com.au

GPs

GPs asked for assistance to improve work-life balance by engaging more GPs for the Practice.

The Workforce Program provides the following services:

- Free listing of primary healthcare providers and Practice staff job vacancies on the NBMPHN website
- Accepting CVs from healthcare job seekers and providing a job matching service where possible
- CV assessment and the provision of relevant advice regarding recruitment processes
- Advice/assistance pertaining to the NSW Health Area of Need program and to relevant application processes
- Liaising with local universities and Regional Training Providers in order to develop the region's capacity to host medical students, pre-vocational doctors, and GP registrars
- Providing relevant induction and orientation to registrars and health professionals who have recently arrived in the region


NBMPHN is developing a web page promoting the benefits of practising in this region and we will share this with GPs once available. Practices will be welcome to link to this page.

 www.nbmphn.com.au/Workforce

GP Registrars in Training

GP Synergy is the registered training provider for registrars in this region. The NBMPHN region is a mandatory placement requirement (Area B) for all GP registrars in the Nepean North Sydney training region. The placement process requires registrars to apply for GP positions via a competitive process – however the numbers of registrars available for positions and the numbers of accredited GP training Practices in the region are closely matched at present. NBMPHN continues to consult with GP Synergy as an advocate for the workforce needs within our region.

GP Synergy's website:

 www.gpsynergy.com.au

Registrar Orientation and Support

NBMPHN sends a welcome email to all registrars when they arrive in the region. Additionally, orientation sessions for each rotation of registrars are planned, where the organisation provides an overview of the region, offers support and highlights various PHN initiatives they can take advantage of or participate in. This strategy will also help encourage registrars to consider working in the region once they are fully qualified.

In addition to Practices ensuring they involve registrars in more complex cases within the Practice, registrars are also welcome to attend NBMPHN Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events. It is hoped Practices encourage their registrars to attend and provide them time to do so. Registrars have no mandated CPD requirements.

Locums

NBMPHN's Workforce Program Officer may be able to help with sourcing suitable locums.

They will require the following information:

1. The starting date that you require a locum, together with details of the hours / days required and any specific relevant details of your Practice.
2. If you have already advertised anywhere else to find a locum.

Locums need to be vocationally registered and they can be employed through locum agencies. Most GP/Practice Nurse locums would go through an agency to be assured of consistent work.



www.nbmphn.com.au/Workforce

Practice Nurses

Workforce Support can advertise positions available within Practices. We currently encourage interested nurses to submit CVs. Nurses can undertake training from the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA) and NBMPHN works with APNA to encourage and facilitate this type of training. Our Practice Support Officers are also available to assist Practice Nurses.

Planning for the Future:

Grant Opportunities for General Practice

All publicly-available grant opportunities for the Department of Health (DoH) are now advertised on the GrantConnect website. GrantConnect is the whole-of-government grants information system:



www.grants.gov.au

All publicly-available tenders and business opportunities for the DoH are advertised on the AusTender website:



www.tenders.gov.au

Practice Transitioning Support – e.g. Expansion, Amalgamation

The Workforce Team can assist you to recruit a doctor or if you are selling a Practice we can advertise this on our website. We regularly receive enquiries from doctors outside the region to relocate and establish a Practice in the area and we can link you up with them.



www.nbmphn.com.au/JobAds

Preparation for RACGP Fellowship Exams

To help prepare for exams, you can contact the Workforce Program Officer. A list of ideas including active Facebook study groups, workshops run by the RACGP, paid courses and helpful resources can be provided.



Theme 3: Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing Professional Development is an important part of the NBMPHN Practice Support Program and is available to all GPs in the region.

Over the past 12 months CPD has been delivered to cover CPR, immunisation, My Health Record and preparing General Practices for disasters as well as a number of events on specific health conditions. These activities are promoted via the NBMPHN website; fortnightly upcoming events email; and the *Practice News* bulletin. These are all accredited with the RACGP for QI&CPD points for the 2017-2019 triennium.

In the 2017-2018 financial year NBMPHN will be delivering professional development covering:

- Alcohol and other drugs' treatment*
- Cancer screening for breast, cervical and bowel cancer
- Cultural competency training for Practices providing services to Aboriginal patients
- Digital mental health resources*
- Domestic violence – how to respond and where to refer*
- Health Care Homes initiative*
- Immunisation*
- Inserting the Implanon contraceptive device*
- Management of COPD*
- Smoking cessation in pregnant women
- Suicide prevention*

*Note: * Denotes topics that will be offered in Windsor.*

Additional topics will be available in the Blue Mountains, Lithgow and NBMPHN's main office in Werrington. There is the potential to plan up to four extra CPD events per year in the Hawkesbury, with topics determined by GPs. These are in addition to the planned CPD topics mentioned above.

The majority of GPs surveyed expressed an interest in collegial activities such as an annual dinner. NBMPHN and the Hawkesbury Doctors Network have worked together to develop an annual event to address this need.

For all upcoming CPD and other events visit:
www.nbmphn.com.au/Events

For CPD information and support or to provide ideas including topics for consideration, contact the **NBMPHN Events Coordinator** (see page 48)

“ I would love an annual Hawkesbury function to get to know local colleagues. ”

View our events calendar:

 www.nbmphn.com.au/Events

GPs called for the following specific CPD events:

CPR

CPR sessions have been offered in Windsor in previous years. Due to the small numbers historically attending these events, they are being staged at the PHN Werrington office this year. This will be reviewed for future years.

Financial Matters e.g. Locums, Tax

GPs can list vacancies on our website for locums but for financial and tax matters support can be sought from the Australian Association of Practice Management.


Implanon Training

NBMPHN liaised with MSD and staged GP Implanon training in early October at the University of Notre Dame.

(Please be advised that Family Planning no longer organises Implanon training. GP Registrars can receive Implanon training as part of their education workshops through GP Synergy.)

MBS Changes

Your Practice Support Officer can offer this assistance. For the most up-to-date information and advice you can refer to the Department of Health's MBS Online website:

 www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Home

For MBS interpretation help visit:

 www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/MBS-interpretation

You may also benefit from visiting NBMPHN's MBS webpage which includes the MBS Items Online Checker and helpful MBS resources:

 www.nbmphn.com.au/GP/MBS

Medico-legal Issues

We regularly run medico-legal sessions, two to three times per year, held in our Werrington office. If there is enough interest we can organise a medico-legal session for Windsor, to be delivered by a law or insurance firm.

Paediatric Patients with ADHD

On 17 June 2017 NBMPHN conducted an all-day paediatrics health workshop at the Fairmont Resort, Leura. Diagnosing and managing ADHD was one of the key topics. This workshop was promoted to all GPs in the region. For speaker presentations visit:



www.nbmphn.com.au/ClinicalPaediatricDay2017



Theme 4: Acute Care Services Including Communication with the Hospital

GPs raised a number of issues that related to service provision and pathways of communication across sectors. NBMPHN is advocating with all healthcare providers, including Hawkesbury Hospital, to improve primary healthcare communication across the region. The development of the Nepean Blue Mountains HealthPathways program will assist GPs to identify local services' pathways.

Some of the needs expressed by GPs included:

- Electronic discharge summaries from Hawkesbury Hospital
- Local public paediatric services to cope with the demand, especially in the areas of speech pathology and audiometry
- Access to local infection diseases and immunology clinic/specialist



www.nbmphn.com.au/HealthPathways

GPs called for specific Hawkesbury Hospital services including:

- Outpatient services
- A fracture clinic
- Dialysis services
- Public diabetic clinic (at least monthly)

NBMPHN will raise this feedback with the Director of Medical Services at Hawkesbury Hospital for consideration and resolution.

Further information:

The NBMLHD Outpatient Clinic Service Directory may be beneficial which covers Blue Mountains and Nepean clinics. The Directory is aimed at making it easier for GPs and patients to understand what services are available and how to access them.



www.nbmlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/nbmlhd-outpatient-clinic-service-directory

NBMPHN's website also provides a list of all contact details for local community health centres including referral forms to access this type of service:



www.nbmphn.com.au/CommunityHealth

Digital Health

GPs reported a number of issues relating to digital health.

In addition to highlighting discharge summaries as an area of concern, they also wanted advice on My Health Record and other transfer of patient information requirements between the hospital and primary care.

NBMPHN Feedback:

There is a My Health Record for 98 per cent of the population within the Nepean Blue Mountains region. Although the My Health Record is at the development stage with some of its components, the basic requirement of a Shared Health Summary is available to all patients whose GP is connected to My Health Record. This will support better communication between healthcare providers. It is important for GPs to check the availability of My Health Record in their Practice.

In addition, gaps relating to service provision and communication will also be identified through the development of specific health pathways. The HealthPathways Program has a mechanism to raise issues of clinical redesign to a governance level for review.

For more information about HealthPathways or My Health Record visit:



www.nbmphn.com.au/HealthPathways



www.nbmphn.com.au/GP/MyHealthRecord



Theme 5: Care and Support for Vulnerable Patients

GPs identified particular vulnerable groups within their local communities. Primary healthcare needs are recognised as significant among the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, migrant refugees, older persons and people affected by domestic violence. NBMPHN currently has a number of strategies to improve aspects of primary healthcare within these groups.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community¹

Closing the Gap (CTG)

From 1 May 2017 the Integrated Team Care program (previously known as Closing the Gap) was commissioned to Nepean Community and Neighbourhood Services (NCNS). NCNS will deliver the same service across the region for all Aboriginal patients who are participating in the Program. To enquire about services for your Aboriginal patients, phone NCNS on 02 4721 8520, or visit their website:

 www.nepeancommunity.org.au

Aboriginal Medical Service

Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service has recently been contracted by the Department of Health to support the delivery of the new Aboriginal Medical Service at Mt Druitt. For more information visit:

 www.wachs.net.au

If you are an accredited General Practice, and would like to access Indigenous services for your Aboriginal patients using a range of incentives, you can register for the Practice Incentive Program Indigenous Health Incentive.

For information see the DoH website:

 www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/services/medicare/practice-incentives-program

¹ Throughout this document, the term 'Aboriginal' is used to refer to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Older Persons:

GPs reported:


- a lack of staff in nursing homes and a lack of training e.g. night staff not trained in CPAP
- the need to educate nursing and health staff in nursing homes

NBMPHN feedback:

The needs of older persons, including a connection with residential aged care facilities across the region, are being addressed by NBMPHN according to a prioritisation of need. Key focus areas of the organisation over the next 12 months include:

- the development of end-of-life care planning including Advance Care Directives to support patients to be managed according to their wishes and avoid hospitalisation
- the administration of antibiotics and polypharmacy issues affecting older persons
- increasing rates of influenza vaccinations across the region specifically targeting residential aged care facilities


NBMPHN offers an online decision tool for GPs to support them with older persons at risk of hospitalisation.

 www.agedcarewentworth.com.au

Migrant Refugees

As part of NBMPHN's work to address the needs of migrant refugees, NBMPHN has purchased 100 licences of a cultural competency online course for interested Practice Nurses to complete at their convenience over four hours. The respected program, produced by SBS, offers 8 CPD points and is accredited by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation.

For more information about the program, offered for a limited time only, visit:

 www.nbmphn.com.au/PracticeNurseResources

A GP education webinar series with a focus on addressing culturally-safe conversations around specific topics/issues including health literacy, sexual health and cancer screening is to be held from November 2017 to June 2018.

People affected by Domestic Violence

Domestic violence posters aimed at women have been developed by NBMPHN and NBMLHD for displaying in General Practice waiting rooms. To order posters email events@nbmphn.com.au

NBMPHN has also co-developed a GP education session on domestic violence. This is due to be offered in Windsor in late 2017 or early 2018.

The Women's Cottage in Richmond

– a community-based support and resource centre that offers specialist support for women who have experienced violence and abuse and a range of other support services.

A Drop-In/Phone-In Service is available to access the Women's Advocacy Violence Emergency (W.A.V.E.) Support Worker. No appointment is needed for the Drop-In Service but to access the Women's Cottage services, women should drop in or phone within the hours listed on the Cottage's website below:

www.womenscottage.org.au/about-us/

Location: 22 Bosworth St, Richmond

Phone: 4578 4190

Hawkesbury City Council

has recently developed a *Family and Domestic Violence Action Plan (FDVAP)*. The Plan has been developed to identify actions that can be undertaken by all levels of government (including Council); the Hawkesbury community; and local services and agencies, to support Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) victims and reduce the occurrence of FDV in the local area. Hawkesbury GPs and NBMPHN provided input into the Plan.

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre

has an office in Windsor:

P: 4587 8877

E: windsor@wsclc.org.au

W: www.wsclc.org.au/

Relevant
domestic
violence
services and
information

The Integrated Violence Prevention and Response Service operates out of Springfield Cottage, Penrith and also covers the Hawkesbury region. It is a comprehensive service that aims to support individuals, families, communities and services to reduce the health impact of violence, abuse and neglect. The Service provides treatment and counselling services for people affected by sexual assault and child physical and emotional abuse, neglect and family violence.

To refer to the Service during business hours phone **4734 2512** or after hours phone the Nepean Hospital switch on **4734 2000** and ask for the on-call counsellor for the domestic violence/sexual assault unit.



Theme 6: Mental Health

GPs highlighted issues around mental health including the need for:

- access to treatment for acute psychiatric problems
- access to bulk billing and low cost psychological or psychiatric services
- access to support options e.g. Asperger's/Autism spectrum disorder
- access for drug addiction/dual diagnosis/pain management – need more accessible local services and resources
- mental health support for children aged over 10 years. Low socio-economic group – need an affordable option
- support for Australian Defence Force families – separated from family members for periods of time
- support for residents with mental health issues who have recently moved to the area from farming communities and feel isolated

NBMPHN Feedback:

The provision of primary mental health services and drug and alcohol services are currently key commissioning activities of NBMPHN in an endeavour to meet the needs of the region by providing more services. These are new developments for the organisation and GPs will be kept informed about new services as they become available.

ATAPS Access

Details of local providers are located on the NBMPHN website. On the ATAPS homepage (see link below), the ATAPS Provider Directories are located on the right hand side – one alphabetically listed and the other by suburb:



www.nbmphn.com.au/GP/ATAPS

Please note ATAPS is currently undergoing a reform process and this may impact on the engagement of providers in the future.

Mental Health Website

NBMPHN has established a website that provides information about local mental health services and how to access them.



www.MentalHealthHelp.com.au

Mental Health Skills Training

NBMPHN engaged The Black Dog Institute to deliver training approved by the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration (GPMHSC) for Focussed Psychological Strategies Skills Training (FPSST) in February 2016. The training was provided using Partners in Recovery funding. Unfortunately NBMPHN no longer has funding which could enable similar training to be provided.

The RACGP has a directory of accredited mental health training providers:

For further information visit:



www.racgp.org.au/education/gpmhsc/training/



Theme 7: Advocacy for GPs

GPs voiced the need for representation on a number of issues ranging from advocacy for Medicare changes to developing peer-to-peer networks in the Hawkesbury. Where possible, advocacy for significant matters relating to General Practice are raised through NBMPHN's GP Advisory Committee (see page 46 for details).



www.nbmphn.com.au/GPAC

You can also refer matters relating to health consumers to the Community Advisory Committee, a joint initiative of NBMPHN and Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. Contact the Stakeholder Governance and Engagement team for details (see page 48) or visit:



www.nbmphn.com.au/CAC

Allied Health Costs

A directory of Allied Health organisations in our region currently exists on the National Health Services Directory, located on the right hand side of the NBMPHN homepage:



www.nbmphn.com.au

GP Wellbeing and Support

Peer-to-peer support is certainly an important component in maintaining a happy and well-balanced work life. Opportunities currently exist for GPs to connect with other GPs through NBMPHN's CPD program, particularly on clinical matters. Additionally, NBMPHN is exploring ideas for activities to help support GP wellbeing and is eager to hear from you. All input is welcome.

- The Hawkesbury Doctors Network is a good way to build and maintain connections with GPs in the local area. For more details see page 46.
- For a list of health services available to support GPs visit:



www.nbmphn.com.au/GPhealth

- Past editions of the peer-to-peer bulletin *GP Grapevine* deal with the subject of GP wellbeing and ways to debrief:



www.nbmphn.com.au/GPgrapevine

Medicare Changes

NBMPHN will keep GPs informed regularly of major changes to the health system that supports Medicare and affects GPs' provision of services. e.g. the MBS is currently mid-way through a review and once we have more information on the progression of the review we'll advise. Where issues

of concern affecting patient care are evident widely across the Nepean Blue Mountains region, NBMPHN escalates concerns to the relevant internal clinical governance group and/or external sector e.g. State and Commonwealth Health jurisdictions.

Public Health Issue Updates

It is well recognised that public health issues affect primary care services. NBMPHN has a close working relationship with the Nepean Blue Mountains Public Health Unit and regularly advises General Practice of public health issues including updates to immunisation schedules, new immunisations, disease clusters and outbreaks. Health information is contained within our annual Needs Assessment of the region which provides a snapshot of key health and service needs most recently identified across the region that affect populations including chronic disease, mental health, alcohol and drugs, older persons, workforce, Aboriginal and CALD specific.

Read more:



www.nbmphn.com.au/Reports



Theme 8: Local Community Needs

GPs raised a number of concerns relating to gaps in services for their patients within the community setting. This valuable feedback will contribute towards planning for health services in the Hawkesbury area. Ideas and concerns shared by GPs included:

- Staging community information sessions regarding relevant health issues e.g. in local preschools/schools; could be run by a specialist and GP presenting on a topic
- Education for the community regarding the cost of GP healthcare to encourage an improvement in valuing the service and willingness to pay
- Community networks supports needed i.e. mobile preschool for mums and bubs
- Lots of young mums with unplanned pregnancies – role for GP in school education
- Local access is poor – inadequate footpaths make it impossible for the elderly/mums and bubs to walk to shops, doctor etc. Unsafe for mobility scooters. Need council representation
- Financial affordability to see specialists / health care services
- Community physiotherapy – accessibility, e.g. costs for community nursing, greater accessibility, dressings/general home visits
- Support for the elderly / help with carer stress / daycare centres greater accessibility

“
Access to specialists / surgical
waitlists especially orthopaedics
..... ”

“
Affordable dental health care
for people on low incomes
..... ”

- Diabetes education needed
- Support for ADF families separated from family for periods of time
- More focus on 'wellness' strategies for the community including for young people
- Allergic disorders – lack of immunologists and facilities for allergy testing
- Accessible paediatric and developmental assessments – currently excessively long waits in the Hawkesbury
- A late night pharmacy is needed
- Problem with homelessness. Patients can't afford medications. Need more access for patients who can't afford health care, especially mental health
- Too long a waiting list for speech therapy at HDH. Need public audiometry for kids, locally available
- Home visit support needed

“
 Transport-stability of
 access to Windsor +
 Penrith hospitals + clinics
”

“
 Huge drug problem,
 especially ICE – need
 strategies to tackle this
”

Your PHN

Wentworth Healthcare, provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network (NBMPHN), aims to improve the health of our community by empowering General Practice and other healthcare professionals to deliver high quality, accessible and integrated primary healthcare that meets the needs of our community. This involves activities that are not always visible to GPs such as the commissioning of services that will work closely with primary care to support patients.

Ways to Connect

The outcomes of our initiatives are often communicated through informal and formal GP networks in the following communication vehicles:

Fortnightly newsletter *Practice News*

www.nbmphn.com.au/PracticeCommunications

Annual Highlights Report

www.nbmphn.com.au/Reports

CEO blog

www.nbmphn.com.au/CEOdesk

Peer-to-peer bulletin *GP Grapevine*

www.nbmphn.com.au/GPgapevine

If you are not receiving our communications via email and would like to do so, please visit:

www.nbmphn.com.au/signup

It's your PHN – why not get involved?

One way to help improve awareness of what NBMPHN does is for more GPs to get involved.

Apart from receiving communications, there are many other ways to be engaged with the PHN in advisory roles, providing feedback, participating in programs, research and activities.

We will continue to share the excellent results from GP contributions and build connections with GPs to help improve the health of the region.

Ways to have your say

There are a variety of ways to share issues, general feedback and ideas as well as connecting with your peers:



NBMPHN GP Advisory Committee (GPAC)

An important part of GPAC's role is to advise NBMPHN on decision making at the Practice level and to strengthen the support provided to GPs in their day-to-day work. Members raise issues in relation to health pathways, hospitals, aged care facilities, workforce, GP education and training and many more important areas.

Contact your Hawkesbury GPAC representatives:

- Dr Trudie Rombola: P: c\ - 4708 8100 E: trombola@ksqp.com.au
- Dr David Foley: P: c\ - 4708 8100 E: dfoley72@hotmail.com
- Dr Rory Webb: P: 4577 5622 E: rwebb@ksqp.com.au



Hawkesbury Doctors Network

The Hawkesbury Doctors Network is a good way to build and maintain connections with GPs in the local area. The Network was formed to provide a voice for GPs in the region about issues affecting their community and the delivery of quality healthcare. The network was created after the closure of the Hawkesbury-Hills Division of General Practice. Membership is free and is open to any medical practitioner working in the Hawkesbury area. Members receive relevant information regarding upcoming medical events in the Hawkesbury region and items considered to be of interest to the medical community.

For more information contact:

- Dr Mark Brunacci E: mark@brunacci.net.au P: c\ - 4708 8100
- Dr Tony Rombola: E: arombola@ksqp.com.au P: c\ - 4708 8100



Provide your input anytime online at:

www.nbmphn.com.au/GPinput

NBMPHN treats all information confidentially and ensures it is forwarded to the appropriate GP Clinical Advisor or NBMPHN Manager for review and action.

The Who's Who of NBMPPHN

Key Contacts



General Practice Support

Zieta O'Brien: Manager, General Practice Support Services
E: zieta.obrien@nbmpphn.com.au
P: 4708 8100
Monday to Friday

Zieta will be able to assist you and/or put you in contact with your designated General Practice Support Officer for one-on-one support.

General Practice Support Officers provide a wide range of activities to assist local General Practice to deliver quality primary healthcare to our community. We recognise that all Practices are unique and operate according to a range of business models – with varying needs for Practice support. You may elect to receive assistance on a regular or ad-hoc basis including targeted activities, with a choice of face-to-face or phone support. We can also work with you on a more intensive basis to help you develop quality improvement systems and processes.

The wide range of activities your General Practice Support Officer can work with you on includes:

- Accreditation
- Data collection and reporting
- Quality improvement activities
- Information management and IT
- e-Health / My Health Record
- Practice management systems
- Immunisation and cold chain management
- Workforce solutions
- Education and training
- Prevention programs
- After hours support
- MBS, Practice and Service payments
- Practice Nurse programs
- Chronic disease program

For more information visit

www.nbmpnhn.com.au/PracticeSupport



Workforce Support

Rakesh Patel: Workforce Program Officer
P: 4708 8100 E: workforce@nbmphn.com.au
Tuesday to Thursday

Areas in which Rakesh can support you include:

- applying for Area of Need status
- recruiting GPs through District of Workforce Shortage arrangement
- placing recruitment advertisements on NBMPHN's website
- advising the rules and regulations around employing overseas-trained doctors
- assisting with resume screening
- support in buying, selling and establishing a medical practice



Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Events

Barbara Mossman: Events Coordinator
P: 4708 8100 E: events@nbmphn.com.au
Monday to Friday

You may wish to contact Barbara to:

- find out about upcoming GP education events
- suggest topics for GP education activities
- follow up on documentation and allocation of QI&CPD points



General Feedback and Queries

Stakeholder Governance and Engagement Team

P: 4708 8100 E: engagement@nbmphn.com.au
Monday to Friday

Examples of when to contact the team:

- To provide feedback on local issues or concerns e.g. communication with the hospital
- To provide input into NBMPHN programs and services e.g. suggestions for GP Program Advisors; sharing your area/s of expertise or interest
- To put forward an agenda item/s for the GP Advisory Committee e.g. a local or regional concern or ideas you want to share
- To contribute to the peer-to-peer bulletin *GP Grapevine*
- To provide general feedback to NBMPHN or to ask questions

If the team can't help you, they will be happy to put you in contact with the right person.

While the Australian Government Department of Health has contributed to the funding of this material, the information contained in it does not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government and is not advice that is provided, or information that is endorsed, by the Australian Government. The Australian Government is not responsible in negligence or otherwise for any injury, loss or damage however arising from the use of or reliance on the information provided herein.

Level 1, Suite 1, Werrington Park Corporate Centre
14 Great Western Highway, Kingswood NSW 2747
*Post to: WHL, Bldg BR, Level 1, Suite 1,
Locked Bag 1797, Penrith NSW 2751*
www.nbmphn.com.au | 02 4708 8100



Australian Government



Wentworth Healthcare Limited (ABN 88 155 904 975) as Nepean Blue Mountains PHN.

www.nbmphn.com.au/reports

© 2017 Wentworth Healthcare Limited 188_0817