

# Aged Care News

~ keeping GPs & nursing homes informed ~

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## Aged care pilot at Ex-Services Home underway

The pilot program was launched in May at the Ballina Ex-Services Home with visiting GPs. A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the division, participating GPs and the Ballina Ex Services Home.

With this program Medical Director has been set up at the facility allowing fully integrated interdisciplinary patient notes with electronically generated medication charts. This system can be dialled into by participating GPs from their practices to access patient notes. Standardised templates have been developed for patient profile, transfer/discharge, restraint authorisation, care plans, speech pathology



and physiotherapy to date.

Integral to the success of getting this program in place has been the high level of motivation and vision by visiting GPs and the director of care Joan David.

Professional staff at the facility have been undergoing MD training provided by the division's aged care project officer, Judy Sheldon and IMIT project officer, David Cook.

### Selling the message

"Get Connected" presentations were shown to two other aged care facilities interested in participating in the program as well as other GPs attending the Ex-Services Home.

We have also held meetings with pharmacists attending the Ballina Ex-Services Home, Maranoa and St Joseph's aged care facilities to introduce the new Medical Director nursing home medication charts being trialled in the pilot program.

With the introduction of the program, it is hoped the attending GPs will develop the practice of using the Medicare Plus aged care initiative to

*Pictured at the Medical Director switch on at the Ballina Ex-Services Home in May are physiotherapy aid Roslyn Churchill, NRDGP aged care project officer Judy Sheldon, director of care Joan David, and NRDGP IMIT project officer David Cook.*

attend to comprehensive medical assessments, medication reviews, care plans and case conferences to improve quality of care for all aged care residents.

In the coming months we would like to introduce this program to other aged care facilities in the division's area that wish to be involved.

For further information and a presentation of the program contact Judy Sheldon, David Cook or Beth Heldt at the division on 6622 4453 or email [jsheldon@nrdgp.org.au](mailto:jsheldon@nrdgp.org.au).

*Everybody knows that Australia is getting older, meaning not only that we are all individually ageing, but the proportion of elderly in the population is increasing because of lower birth rates and increasing longevity.*

*This situation appears more prevalent in country areas than in the capital cities, the Northern Rivers being one such area.*

*Residents of aged care homes often have difficulty accessing appropriate medical care through GPs, for various reasons*

*The introduction of the Aged Care GP Panel Initiative in June 2004 aims to address this issue by building better relationships with the aged care facilities and attending GPs to provide and develop efficient and effective service to meet the needs of aged care residents.*

*With the key priorities identified being standardised medication charts, electronic medical records and regular onsite visits by GPs to aged care facilities, the division has implemented a pilot program to address these needs.*