

# Aged Care News

~ keeping GPs & nursing homes informed ~

Issue 1, March 2005

## New newsletter will keep you informed

This is the inaugural quarterly newsletter for the aged care project. *Aged Care News* aims to keep you informed of progress with the GP aged care panel initiatives and developments within the Northern Rivers area.

There will also be regular updates in *GPSpeak*, the division's bi-monthly magazine.

With the number of aged care homes increasing as the population ages, the need to look at long term solutions is on the agenda. There is also evidence that there is an increase

in residents requiring high levels of care.

Aged care homes have been finding it increasingly difficult to retain the services of GPs who can provide regular consults to residents. With this project we hope to slow, and hopefully reverse, this decline with workable solutions to some of the issues faced by both GPs and aged care facilities.

Please don't hesitate to contact me on 6622 4453 if you would like to raise any issues or comment on the process.



Judy Sheldon, project officer for the aged care project.

## Aged care initiative moves forward

The Aged Care GP Panel Initiative introduced in June 2004 is progressing well. The initiative aims to build better relationships between aged care facilities (ACFs) and attending GPs to develop and provide an efficient and effective service that meets the needs of aged care residents.

After surveys conducted with aged care facilities and the GPs attending the residents in these facilities, three key priorities and issues have been identified:

1. Electronic medical records
2. Standardised medication charts
3. On site visiting by GPs to the aged care facility

Plans to establish and implement activities to address these priorities are being developed to assist in achieving the desired outcome of this initiative.

### Current divisional activities

**aimed at achieving the three objectives of the aged care panel initiative:**

■ *Improved access to appropriate medical care for all aged care residents.*

The pilot program includes development of a memorandum of understanding between ACFs, GPs and the division.

The MOU will include agreement by GPs to visit ACFs on a regular basis with ACF staff available to assist with CMA, medication review, case conferencing and care plans.

■ *Increased participation of GPs in aged care initiatives aimed at improving quality of care.*

ACF staff and GPs currently involved in the GP panel initiative have already identified issues, training needs and policy procedures that need to be developed. These will be developed in pilot sites.

■ *GPs and divisions working more effectively in the future to improve services provided to aged care.*

The three main issues identified above will be addressed through the pilot program.

**Aged care facilities expressing interest in participating in the pilot program include:**

Ex-Service Home, Ballina  
St Josephs Aged Care Facility, Lismore  
Maranoa ACF, Lismore  
Lismore & Nimbin Residential ACF, Nimbin

15 GPs attending these facilities are willing to participate in the pilot program.

The Ex-Service Home in Ballina is expected to start the pilot on 1st May 2005.

Monthly meetings with the GP advisory group are ongoing to keep up to date and address any issues relating to the pilot program.

In the coming weeks an update of the pilot program will be demonstrated to management in the aged care facilities in the Northern Rivers Division of General Practice area.