

Building Strength Connecting GPs and aged care facilities

The Medical Director program introduced as a pilot program at the Ballina Ex Services aged care facility in May 2005 continues to gain strength with other aged care facilities in the region steadily coming on-line.



Margaret Klages, registered nurse from Maranoa is pictured with GP Peter MacDonald at Carroona Aged Care Facility.

Lismore's St Josephs and Maranoa are the most recent facilities to be involved, with staff training recently taking place and the GPs using the system when visiting residents there. Uniting Care Carroona is proceeding with the MD program in its Lismore facilities, with the Yamba and Bonalbo hostels to come on line at a later stage.

With the facilities in Lismore participating in the program, the division

hosted a get together of nursing staff and GPs attending these facilities in early May to address any issues with Medical Director in aged care, look at where we are with the project, and at future directions to take.

The Ballina facilities of St Andrews and Crowley are in the set-up stages with the program. Staff training has been delivered at St Andrews and will start at Crowley when the IT is in place.

A get together held in Ballina recently was attended by staff from St

"General practice before computerisation and the use of software such as Medical Director already seems to be part of the 'dark ages'. It is hard to imagine medicine without it. In the short time that it has become available in nursing homes I can see that it is also an invaluable tool in aged care. Soon we will wonder how we ever did without it. Its arrival into aged care was inevitable and not a second too early."

Lismore GP, Shane Delaney

Andrews and Crowley Village, as well as by GPs providing services to the residents of these facilities. Issues with the Medical Director program were discussed and positive feedback was expressed with the program and the direction it is taking.

The Mareeba aged care facility at



Pictured at the recent get together held in Ballina are: (l-r) Lennox GP Jon Ferguson, Ballina GP Michael Hayter, Ballina GP John Jarynski, aged care project officer Judy Sheldon

Maclean has the system in place and the Lower Clarence Retirement Village is ready to set up. Staff training in Medical Director has recently started in these facilities. GPs in Maclean and Yamba have been signing MoUs to participate in this program in these facilities.

The RACGP has released the fourth edition of medical care of older persons in residential aged care facilities otherwise known as the Silver Book. This edition comes in three formats: print, CD-ROM, and on the RACGP website. Aged care facilities will have received their book by now and GPs providing services to aged care residents will receive copies shortly. The Silver Book is designed to provide guidance to both novice and experienced GPs working with aged care. Nurses and other staff working in aged care facilities will also find the book useful.

CASE STUDY

How electronic sharing can work for you

Dr G starts his day by checking his emails and any results that have come in before surgery starts. He has a message from House on the Hill nursing home that Gladys, one of his long term patients, is moving there today.

Dr G transfers Gladys's electronic notes from the surgery to House on the Hill where all clinical staff share fully integrated notes. Dr G has 11 patients at the facility and enjoys his role in providing care to them. He is pleased that today is his regu-

lar Tuesday afternoon visit to House on the Hill and he won't need to make a separate trip to settle Gladys in.

When Dr G arrives, the nursing staff have already accessed Gladys's notes and partially completed their resident scale classifications (RCS). They have also done a baseline assessment that will help complete a comprehensive medical assessment (CMA) that Dr G will undertake during the admission process.

At this time Dr G decides a residential

medication management review (RMMR) would be timely and completes the required paperwork electronically and emails to the pharmacist. The pharmacist, when he visits, is grateful for the standardised electronic medication charts, which has reduced the number of medication errors.

The nursing staff prepare for Dr G's visit by checking the integrated notes of his residents for any due reminders. Often a care plan review is scheduled and completed. Where necessary, a case conference is called for a change in resident condition or complex issues. This process optimises both GP and nursing staff time and provides more coordinated resident care.