

# GP Community Briefs

Keeping you up to date with the activities of the Northern Rivers Division of General Practice

February 2007

## NR Family Care Centre has helped more than 1700 families

The Northern Rivers Family Care Centre has helped more than 1,700 families experiencing post natal problems in the five years it has been operating.

The centre has proven itself to be a valuable component of local services for post natal and infant care with about 2,500 visits made by these 1,700 families. The service grows each year and last year 571 families visited the centre for help with a range of post-natal issues.

An initiative of the Northern Rivers Division of General Practice, which currently operates and funds the Family Care Centre, it is housed rent free at St Vincent's Hospital and is supported by the North Coast Area Health Service.

The community was a fantastic help getting the project off the ground, contributing more than \$30,000 in goods to set up the FCC in the grounds of St Vincent's Hospital with volunteers helping to get the building ready for occupation. Local community organisations, specifically Zonta, also contribute regularly to the on-going needs of the FCC.

Modelled on the Tresillian centres, the service is a day stay service for parents with children from newborn to around one year of age who are experiencing difficulties with parenting and cannot be managed in the primary care sector. It deals with the more complex feeding, sleeping and adjustment problems of infancy.

Referrals to the FCC come primarily from early childhood nurses, but may also come from GPs.

The service offers:

- Counselling for parents, often for post natal distress and family relationships;
- Supportive groups;
- Preventative programs to promote resilience;
- Outreach services to Ballina, Evans Head, Casino;



State MPs Thomas George and Don Page with a group of mums and their babies who have used the Family Care Centre to help them with various parenting issues. Also pictured are the NRDGP's Paul Earner, GP advisor for the FCC, and Caroline Ryan, child and family health nurse (centre back), GP population health manager Dr Dan Ewald (far left), and CEO Chris Clark (far right).

- Phone based follow up;
- Links to on-referral to Tresillian programs;
- Lactation consultant; and
- Training for early childhood nurses.

A breastfeeding support project also started last year with funding from the YWCA Community for Children program. There is a drop in clinic in the Lismore public library, as well as two 'by appointment' clinics at the Family Care Centre (see ad on reverse).

The FCC costs about \$180,000 a year to run and the division is now seeking alternative funding.

"We are very proud of what the Family Care Centre is achieving for the community, and we are now looking for a financial part-

ner so that we can guarantee and maintain the service into the future," chair of the division, Tony Lembke said.

The division is currently in negotiations with the North Coast Area Health Service and is also talking to NSW Health and the region's State politicians in order to spread the net as widely as possible in seeking alternative funding sources.

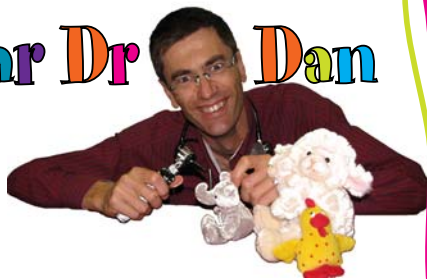


## Dr Dan talks rotavirus

In the March edition of Northern Rivers Family Magazine, the *Dear Dr Dan* column discusses rotavirus, a leading cause of severe diarrhoeal disease and dehydration in infants and young children. In the column he explains how common the disease is, how it is spread, how to treat it, and how to try to prevent it (careful hygiene and immunisation).

Contributed by the division's GP executive manager, Dr Dan Ewald, the column appears in Northern Rivers Family Magazine, an independent publication launched in December. In the first issue, Dr Dan wrote about Ross River fever.

### Dear Dr Dan



In each edition, the *Dear Dr Dan* column will look at health issues of concern and relevance to parents with young families. Readers are also invited to send in questions.

The quarterly parenting/ lifestyle magazine covers the Lismore, Ballina and Byron areas and is targeted at families with children aged 0-12 years. It is a free magazine available from selected venues such as schools, day care centres, doctors, libraries, and the Northern Rivers Family Care Centre. To have the magazine delivered to your organisation, email [enquiries@nrfamily.com.au](mailto:enquiries@nrfamily.com.au).



**ASK YOUR GP FOR A REFERRAL**  
[www.parenting.nrdgp.org.au](http://www.parenting.nrdgp.org.au)

For parents with children from newborn to around one year of age who are having difficulties, or require further support with: feeding (breast, weaning, bottle, solids); unsettled behaviour and related sleeping patterns; adjustment to parenthood issues for the family; postnatal distress; or parentcraft issues.



## FREE Breastfeeding Support Clinics

Drop in or by appointment

A Communities for Children initiative

**Tuesdays 9:30am-12:30pm**

**Drop in** to the Parents' Room, First Floor, **Lismore Library**, Carrington Street, Lismore.

**Tuesdays 1:00pm-4:00pm & Fridays 9:00am-4:00pm**

**By appointment** at the **Northern Rivers Family Care Centre**, St Vincent's Hospital, Dalley Street, Lismore.

**PHONE CAROLINE ON 6622 8705**



### WHAT IS A DIVISION OF GENERAL PRACTICE?

Divisions are organisations of GPs within a geographical area that were set up by the Federal Government in 1993. Nationwide, 118 divisions provide a framework for GPs to network with each other and with local health services to improve the community's health.



SPIKE SAYS

**“Vax’em.”**

[www.vaccination.org.au](http://www.vaccination.org.au)

**FEEDBACK:** We value your feedback. If you would like to make the division aware of any ideas for possible health projects, or if you have comments on any of our current projects, please call us on 6622 4453, or email [media@nrdgp.org.au](mailto:media@nrdgp.org.au). Thank you.