



AACP

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION
OF CONSULTANT PHYSICIANS

President's Update – May 2007

New professional attendance items for Consultant Physicians and Paediatricians

On behalf of the AACP Council, I am very pleased to advise that, as a result of the AACP's September 2006 Submission, the 2007 Federal Budget has made provision of \$291.3 million over the next four years for **two new attendance items for Consultant Physicians and Paediatricians**.

The Medicare Benefit Schedule fees for these new items were announced as \$238.30 for an initial consultation of at least 45 minutes duration and \$119.30 for up to two subsequent consultations. These items will be available from 1 November 2007.

The Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Tony Abbott, MHR, in announcing the new Medicare items said:

“The new Medicare items recognise the additional time involved in consultant physician services for treating patients with chronic and complex illnesses. Supporting longer consultations will enable patients with multiple medical problems to receive comprehensive care in the one session, improving their health outcomes. The Medicare item will also encourage new medical graduates to undertake training in the non-procedural specialties. Rural patients will benefit as the new items will make private practice in rural areas more viable.”

These were among the points made in our submission to support the urgent need for new items that recognised the fact that many of our patients are presenting with chronic and increasingly complex care needs that require more extended consultation.

Speaking on 9 May at the Australian Institute of Policy and Science's Post Budget Health Briefing, the Minister reiterated the importance of recognising the value of the non-procedural specialists. The AACP Vice-President, Louis McGuigan, took the opportunity to publicly thank the Minister, agreeing that the new items would have a marked beneficial effect, particularly in attracting new medical graduates to this area of medicine, but also in terms of the sustainability of consultant physician and paediatric practice in rural areas because of the improved level of benefits that will be available to patients.

Members of the AACP Council have worked hard for this success on behalf of all consultant physicians and paediatricians. These new attendance items – the first in more than 20 years – is a significant achievement for **all** consultant physicians and paediatricians.

There is still work to be done between now and November in relation to these new items, and there remain other issues on which the AACP is needed to represent the interests of consultant physicians and paediatricians.

So, this is the appropriate time to remind all our members that the **AACP needs a strong membership base in order to continue to represent YOUR interests.** The track record says it all. For those members who have already paid this year's subscription, thank you for your support. To those members who have yet to pay, please **renew your membership today. For those who are not members, remember we cannot represent you in the long term if you reckon we exist on endless good will. Getting these results is not a matter of just going down to Canberra and expecting to be served.**

We are able to **SUCCESSFULLY** represent members and urge you to renew or join up today. **We need you!**

The AACP is working from a very modest base and has relied to a large extent on the efforts and hard work of a very small number of dedicated people. We need a strong membership to sustain these activities and best represent the interests of you and your patients.

EGM

The EGM was held on 9 May 2007. The proposed amendments to the Association's Memorandum and Articles of Association were passed unanimously.

Les Bolitho
President

10 May 2007