



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTANT PHYSICIANS

PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

December 2009

Inside this issue:

Annual General Meeting	1
Synovial Joint Injections	1
What do these Budget measures mean?	1-2
New Payment Options	2
Seasons Greetings	2

Annual General Meeting

The AACP's Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 26 November 2009, at the Rozelle office.

At the Council meeting following the AGM, office holders were elected as follows: President, **Dr Bill Heddle**, Vice-President, **Dr John Best** and Treasurer, **Dr Andrew Nunn**.

Dr Paul Bauert, **Dr Louis McGuigan** and **Dr Greg Rowell** were confirmed as Council members, having been elected to fill casual vacancies during the year.

On behalf of the membership I would like to congratulate the newly elected office bearers and Council members. Bill Heddle.

Synovial Joint Injections

The removal of synovial joint injection items (50124 and 50125) from the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) was announced in the May 2009 Federal Budget without consultation with the profession, along with several other measures, including reduction in rebates for coronary angiography and cataract surgery and changes to the Expanded Medicare Safety Net arrangements for some obstetric infertility treatment services.

These changes came into effect on 1 November 2009. Patients of rheumatologists no longer receive a rebate

for synovial joint injection services. We understand that the Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA) has been active in encouraging their colleagues and patients to contact their local member of Parliament in an effort to have the decision to remove items 50124 and 50125 from the MBS reversed.

The AACP fully supports the ARA and will assist them in their efforts to reinstate these item numbers. The AACP has previously raised this issue in meetings with the DoHA and will continue to raise our concerns, particularly in regard to the lack of consultation with the ARA prior to this decision.

Contact Us:



AACP

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTANT PHYSICIANS

PO Box 145
BALMAIN NSW 2041

Phone: (02) 9810 0061
Fax: (02) 9555 1383

secretariat@consultantphysicians.com.au
www.consultantphysicians.com.au

What do these Budget measures mean?

The decision to remove synovial joint injections from the MBS demonstrates a lack of understanding of the role of consultant physicians and paediatricians (CPPs). The AACP recently wrote to both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Health and Ageing and invited them to spend time in a consultant physician or

paediatric practice, so that they can better understand the significance of CPPs in the delivery of medical care outside of hospitals. The lack of understanding of your role in patient care continues to be a concern to the AACP. The reports of the current reviews of the health system

(Continued on page 2)

What do these Budget measures mean?

(Continued from page 1)

(NHHRC and NPHCS) do not acknowledge the significant role CPPs play in the delivery of medical care.

The AACP will continue to actively promote the role of CPPs across the health care system.

New Payment Options

The AACP has introduced two new payment options for membership renewals in time for 2010 renewals. Our aim is to provide members with convenient payment options, to make renewing your membership an easy process.

First, we have introduced BPAY, which increases the type of accounts you can use to renew your membership online. BPAY is widely used and trusted, and makes paying your AACP membership fees as easy as paying your phone or electricity bill, through your own bank's online system.

Secondly, we are offering you the option of automatic renewal of your membership each year by the AACP. There is a tick box option on your

2010 tax invoice to give the AACP permission to automatically renew your membership in 2011 and subsequent years, using the credit card details you provide for your 2010 renewal. Prior to debiting your credit card, the AACP will write to you to check your credit card details have not changed in the previous year. If your credit card has expired since the previous renewal, you will also be notified so that you can update your details in time for the automatic renewal.

We expect that these additional renewal options will make renewing your membership an effortless process.

Renew your membership today!

Thank You

To our loyal members, the AACP would like to thank you for your continued support of the work we carry out and belief in what the AACP represents. Without loyal members like you, the AACP would not be sustainable.

Please continue to encourage your colleagues to join the AACP. We still only have approximately 10 per cent of practicing CPPs as members. This needs to be vastly improved to allow us to make greater gains and have increasing influence.

One challenge for the AACP is to encourage more CPPs working in hospitals to support the AACP. There seems to be a view amongst this group that the AACP is not relevant to them. However Medicare items and fees for Medicare benefits are relevant to all CPPs and their patients.

During 2010 the AACP will focus on educating all CPPs on the importance of an overarching organisation and the benefits this brings for all CPPs.



Seasons Greetings

The AACP Council and Secretariat would like to wish our members a happy and safe holiday season.

Best Wishes for Christmas and New Year.

We look forward to a successful 2010.