



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTANT PHYSICIANS

AACP PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER: JUNE 2008

Membership Drive

We are actively campaigning for new members and renewal of membership to enable the advocacy of the AACP, in areas associated with workforce and economic issues, to grow and expand. The AACP is even more relevant now that we have a new Federal Labor Government, with new issues and programs to evaluate and provide advice on changes and new policy.

Please encourage your colleagues to join you in supporting our work, which benefits each and every consultant physician and paediatrician. Membership application forms can be downloaded from our website at www.consultantphysicians.com.au

RACP 2008 Congress

The AACP held a booth at the recent RACP 2008 Congress in Adelaide. Council members attending the Congress met with potential members and discussed the role and agenda of the AACP. I also welcomed the opportunity to meet with current members and hear their feedback on the AACP. I extend a warm welcome to those members that joined up at the Congress and look forward to your continued support.

Below is an update on the areas that the AACP is progressing:

Enhanced Primary Care Items & Chronic Disease Management

There will be ongoing discussions on the AACP's proposal. The Government plans to review a range of GP items, with a view to simplifying the Schedule. It is also intended to look at the definition of "Primary Health Care" – it is expected that this will take into account the need to recognise the involvement of not only GPs and allied health practitioners, but also those specialist medical services delivered within community and ambulatory care settings. There is a new direction for Australia's Health system currently being explored by the NHHRC. (www.nhhrc.org.au)

AACP's proposed "item 118"

The AACP has proposed a new item for prolonged, complex clinical review consultations to follow an initial MBS item 110. There are compelling arguments for the introduction of a new item for complex clinical reviews and the AACP is vigorously pursuing this new item number. The matter will be further considered at our next meeting with the DoHA in July 2008.

Fact Sheet

A fact sheet, '**Appropriate billing of attendance items 132 and 133**', will be circulated by Medicare.

If you require further information or you have suggestions or issues to raise please email the AACP Secretariat at secretariat@consultantphysicians.com.au or phone on 02 9810 0061.

Les Bolitho, AACP President

MBS Items for Pervasive Development Disorders including Autism

The MBCC meeting to be held in March 2008 was postponed by the AMA & DoHA. Comments were requested from the AACP and item numbers descriptors, explanatory notes and MBS Schedule fees have been determined from a finite budget allocation of \$20.7m over the next three years. The AACP will be monitoring implementation of the new Item.

Referrals to Allied Health Practitioners

The AACP are working to change the anomaly in the current MBS which restricts the referrals to allied health practitioners to general practitioners. This creates unnecessary frustration and expense for patients. Cost effective and timely treatment for patients should be able to be initiated by all medical practitioners, with on-going coordination via their general practitioners.

Geriatric Assessment Items

Further discussions will take place with the DoHA on changes to the current restrictions on these items.