



# Primary Source Immunisation

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## From the Immunisation Principal Network Adviser

It seems a little strange to be saying Happy New Year to everyone when we have so many still in the grip of natural disasters around the country. 2011 has started with the promise of wonderful things for some and with a huge thump for others. We hope that the rest of the year provides relief and opportunities to start again and rise above the disastrous weeks so

far. All our thoughts go out to those affected by the floods in Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania and the opposite extreme of bush fires in Western Australia. Dorothea MacKellar did capture our 'sunburnt country' very well.

Queensland Health has responded to the flood crisis by offering free Tetanus (ADT) vaccination for residents in flood affected areas as well as all volunteers. Qld Health and local councils have been running mobile and hospital based clinics doing mass vaccinations and additional supplies of ADT have been sent to general practice. They are also providing free dTPa vaccine for a limited time for residents in flood affected areas who either live with, or care for a child under six months of age.

There will be issues of course with respect to Queensland's immunisation data due to lost or damaged records and the resulting incomplete data on ACIR which will affect Centrelink payments. Medicare, Qld Health, ACIR and the Department of Health and Ageing have been working to identify the extent of this problem and ways of overcoming them. GPQ and the general practice Network immunisation officers will have first hand knowledge of these problems and no doubt be instrumental in providing the support needed to solve them.

And, of course, cold chain breaches have occurred in numerous areas where there has been flooding and also loss of power. The list goes on.

The following information has been provided by the Department and Medicare Australia to facilitate the provision of services to affected communities.

*Providers who wish to assist in affected communities on a short term basis will be able to access the Medicare benefits arrangements for their services. Medicare Australia will advise the provider to commence at the new location on the date specified in their request for a Provider Number. If the provider is subject to the Medicare provider number restrictions, their application will be forwarded to the Department for an urgent approval for a*

A blue banner with white text for the 'National Forum'. The text reads: 'National Forum', 'Australia's premier primary health care forum', '16-19 November 2011', and 'Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre'.

National Forum  
Australia's premier primary  
health care forum  
16-19 November 2011  
Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre

[Click here to view the events calendar.](#)

provider number.

All applications will be treated as urgent priorities by the Department and Medicare Australia, and access to Medicare benefits arrangements will be available to providers assisting in affected communities from the affected start dates. Regardless of whether a provider is an OTD or is on a placement in a non-affected area they will be able to obtain the necessary provider numbers and approvals to work short-term in flood affected areas.

- Ring the Medicare Australia Provider Eligibility Help Desk on (02) 6124 6753; or  
Email a request to [medicare.provider.eligibility@medicareaustralia.gov.au](mailto:medicare.provider.eligibility@medicareaustralia.gov.au)  
Emails should contain the subject line "Qld Floods - Volunteer Provider Number".

## **Helen Moore Immunisation Principal Network Adviser**

### **Network update**

The boundaries for **Medicare Locals and Local Hospital Networks** have been announced.

Medicare Locals and Local Hospital Networks will mean Australians will benefit from access to better coordinated health care and more efficient use of resources and will find it easier to navigate between service providers and health services.

A total of 42 Medicare Local boundaries have been agreed across all states and territories with the exception of Victoria. The Commonwealth has extended the time for the resolution of the boundaries with the new Victorian Government until the end of January. The first group of Medicare Locals and their associated branch offices will begin operating in mid 2011, with the remainder starting in mid 2012. Medicare Local boundaries were developed following consultations with the states and territories and consideration of approximately 120 submissions from the health sector and the wider community.

[View the Medicare Local boundaries](#)

For further information about primary health care reform go to: <http://www.agpn.com.au/media/Primary-Health-Care-Reform>

### **Primary Source: Medicare Locals - Transition**

The first edition of **AGPN's Primary Source: Medicare Locals - Transition** will be issued in the **first week of February**. This monthly newsletter will provide subscribers with the latest information about the transition process to Medicare Locals throughout the General Practice Network.

Primary Source subscribers who ticked the 'ALL' box will automatically receive the Medicare Locals – Transition newsletter. If you know of anyone else in the primary health care sector who would benefit from receiving this monthly newsletter urge them to go to AGPN's website to subscribe: <http://www.agpn.com.au/media/subscribe>

## National Immunisation Strategy update

Professor Michael Frommer and Associate Professor Rebekah Jenkins from the University of Sydney were engaged by the Department of Health and Ageing last year as consultants to develop a draft issues paper leading to a new National Immunisation Strategy. The current immunisation strategy dates back to 1993. It was updated in 1997 with the *7 point plan* and involved the development of the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR).

The consultants held talks in most jurisdictions during the latter part of last year and followed this in December with a forum of national bodies and relevant organisations to discuss their Issue Paper. This paper focused on areas of governance, workforce, safety, quality, efficacy, effectiveness, communication, knowledge, strategic opportunities and access for special groups.

The result of the national forum and the discussions around the issues paper will lead to the formation of a draft strategy. There was general agreement from all those groups represented at the forum on the need for a robust strategy which incorporated all the major issues presented by our Network. We look forward to viewing the draft and final versions as soon as possible.

Information on the current National Immunisation program or the current Strategy can be found at:

<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/>

## Nominations for the National Primary Health Care Awards open in March 2011

Australia's frontline health service providers will now be able to achieve well earned recognition and rewards for outstanding performance through the inaugural **HESTA Primary Health Care Awards**.

HESTA in conjunction with AGPN created these awards to mark excellence in primary health care.

HESTA CEO Ms Anne-Marie Corboy said the awards were designed to recognise innovation and leadership.

"These are two fundamental elements of a skilled and responsive health workforce," Ms Corboy said.

AGPN CEO David Butt said the awards were timely in light of the incredible health reform agenda facing this sector.

"These awards recognise the role of all those who are usually the first the community turns to when they are sick or injured," Mr Butt said.

**ME Bank has provided \$25,000 in prize money** for the awards which will culminate in a gala dinner at the AGPN's National Forum, to which finalists will be flown.



There are three categories for nominations:

**Young leader**

**Individual distinction**

**Team excellence**

**Nominations open in March 2011 and can be made online at <http://www.phcawards.com.au/>**

## **Immunisation – getting to the point**

The Rural Health Education Foundation will be broadcasting the following health education television program in February 2011 on Immunisation

**Immunisation: Getting to the Point – LIVE satellite broadcast**

**Tuesday 8th February 2011**

**8 pm in NSW, ACT, Vic, Tas**

**7 pm in Qld**

**7.30 pm in SA**

**6.30 pm in NT and**

**5 pm in WA**

This program, chaired by Ms Geraldine Moses, Consultant Clinical Pharmacist, covers the updates to the NIP schedule, new vaccines, best practices & procedures. It also discusses recent outbreaks and pandemics, the benefits and impacts of immunisation across age groups, common misconceptions about immunisation, risk factors and issues for Indigenous & CALD communities.

The program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

Click on the hyperlink for program information and satellite viewing locations

[http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/program-1/?program\\_id=514](http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/program-1/?program_id=514)

## **National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) news**

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance of Vaccine Preventable Diseases (NCIRS) has been added to the list of Vaccine Safety Net web sites. This site represents an important addition to the network as it is the second site to be included from the Western Pacific region. Here is the official link for you to share as/if needed.

[http://www.who.int/immunization\\_safety/safety\\_quality/ncirs/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/immunization_safety/safety_quality/ncirs/en/index.html)

Immunisation project contact: [hmoore@agpn.com.au](mailto:hmoore@agpn.com.au)

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