

Auditor General's Report on the Purchasing of Primary Health Care Provided in General Practice

The College welcomed the Auditor-General's recent report on *Purchasing Primary Health Care Provided in General Practice*, released in March. The report chose to look at the provision of primary health care in general practice 'because most people see GPs as an important part of health care'.

The College was delighted to see recognition of the central role of gen-

eral practice in primary health care. It was pleasing to note the Auditor General's recognition of 'the hard work of general practitioners and general practice teams in providing a quality health service through an extended period of change and instability.' The report recognised the need for stability in the sector to allow for effective purchasing for pri-

mary health care to develop. It further stated that the fact that 'service provision has continued to function as well as it has, reflects, to a large degree, to the goodwill and tenacity of health professionals working in the primary care sector.' It is heartening that the efforts of grass roots general practice are recognised. We hope that this continues to grow.

Resuscitation

Due to significant feedback from consumer representatives about public expectation of their GP to be competent in resuscitation, the College introduced a compulsory module on resuscitation skills for Advanced Vocational Education and Maintenance of Professional Standards (MOPS). This started at the beginning of the triennium, in January 2002. The required pass level is the New Zealand Resuscitation Council (NZRC) level 5.



Whilst an infrastructure of resuscitation trainers was being developed, the College provided a 'stop-gap' of courses to ensure that there was adequate coverage around New Zealand. The College has now endorsed a range of providers to offer courses throughout the country and will not be directly providing any courses itself. The finalised list of providers will be circulated to members within the coming month.

The College has also negotiated a discount for the NZRC resuscitation handbook for College members. To obtain a discount of \$15.00 (from \$65 to \$50 excl. GST) just quote your College membership number when calling the NZRC on 04-385 5366.

In the meantime, if you have any queries, or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Liz Walters at the College's Memberships Services Unit on 04-496 5993 or email liz_walters@rnzcgp.org.nz

Reducing paperwork

College simplifying MOPS reporting

As a result of feedback from members, we have reviewed the way we administer reporting of CME credits. A new College website is under development which includes an option to make MOPS reporting as simple as possible for members. Over the next couple of months, the website will develop the capacity for CME credits to be forwarded electronically directly by registered providers or by members themselves. Members will be able to go into a secure site to check or update their information at any time. This will cut down the need for extra paperwork, something we realise GPs have more than enough of!

We thank members and registered providers for their constructive feedback and will continue to work with you in the coming months. All going well, we hope to launch the new website and MOPS electronic reporting option at the College conference in Rotorua at the end of September.

Practice accreditation

– Funding quality infrastructures in general practice

Not only does the College have a commitment to quality general practice care, it recognises the importance of taking into account the environment within which general practice operates. It is critical to take into account the significant pressures facing general practice, as well as what knowledge and resources are available to GPs and the general practice team and work to ensure that support systems are in place.

The College, IPAC and the NZMA will be working together in the coming months to develop a funding pro-

posal that ensures that general practice is supported and funded for a professionally-led quality system. The joint approach will include costing the funding needs for a three-year cycle for a general practice engaged in the General Practice Accreditation CQI process.

The Practice Accreditation process will use the College's Practice Standards tool and the Standards licensed to an independent accreditation body – Quality in Practice New Zealand. (It is important to note that the Practice Standards tool is only

part of the *process*, and not a tool to be used for contracts output management.)

The independent body is a subsidiary of Australian General Practice Limited, a combined and internationally accredited body of Australian general practice organisations, with experience in providing general practice accreditation in Australia for several years.

The College will work with IPAC to develop implementation tool-kits and practice assistance information to general practice.

RNZCGP Vocational Education News

Stage I General Practice Education

Numbers increased in 2002

The intensive clinical training programme began at the end of January with 57 registrars who are located in teaching practices throughout the country. This is the greatest number of registrars that the programme has had for many years and has resulted from an increased interest in Stage I vocational education and the Clinical Training Agency's (CTA) willingness to fund additional places in 2002.

The programme also has 32 seminar attenders who find their own general practice work and self fund to attend the seminars which form part of the intensive clinical training programme.

A new initiative this year is the offering of a seminar programme at Te Puia Springs on the East Coast for six doctors. This programme has provided an educational opportunity for doctors who, because of geographical location, would not otherwise have been able to attend a seminar programme based in a main city location.

There is a distinctive trend for the Stage I educational programme being seen as a desirable option for overseas qualified doctors who see it as providing a supportive learning environment in which to gain experience in New Zealand general practice. These doctors bring a diversity of medical and cultural experiences

to the programme and enrich the learning of others.

Rural general practice education

The programme continues to promote rural general practice as an important learning experience for trainees. The CTA was asked in 2001 to consider providing additional funding for registrars who had an interest in experiencing rural general practice in the hope that such experience may result in registrars taking up rural general practice on completion of the programme. The CTA agreed to provide this funding and eight rural scholarships have been awarded for 2002. Each scholarship carries a New Zealand rural general practice serv-

ice requirement of three or six months, depending on the amount of the scholarship awarded. This service requirement needs to be fulfilled when the registrar has completed the training programme.

The CTA has recently contracted the College to provide a general practice education programme for ten postgraduate year two doctors to complete a three-month rural general practice rotation. This is a new initiative which aims to offer a stimulating and supportive educational opportunity for PGY2 doctors. It is hoped that some of these doctors will see general practice, and in particular rural general practice, as a future career option. The College is currently seeking a director for this programme. This four-tenths position will provide an interesting opportunity to launch this new initiative for the College.

Māori and Pacific trainees

The programme is active in its attempts to recruit Māori and Pacific doctors

into general practice vocational education. The CTA has funded the appointment of Dr Jan Bryant as Māori Education Coordinator who will assist in recruiting Māori and Pacific trainees and teachers. The CTA has also made funding available for Māori and Pacific training scholarships.

General practice teachers

The training programme recognises the importance of general practitioners being willing to take on a teaching role. Without this input the postgraduate and Stage I programmes could not function. Teachers go through a selection process and then on a six-yearly cycle participate in teacher accreditation which ensures the ongoing quality of their contribution. Teachers attend local and national professional development events. A national teachers' workshop held in Wellington in February attracted over 50 teachers and was marked by participants' enthusiasm and energy for their teaching role and their enjoyment of having the op-

portunity to be amongst like-minded peers who enjoy being part of general practice education.

Educational evaluation and research

The Stage I programme is constantly evaluating its quality as part of its normal quality assurance processes. It also has an active research programme. A current outcomes research pilot being carried out in Auckland focuses on enhancing patient-centred communication skills and evaluating the teaching of communication skills during the training programme.

The pilot will measure the extent to which participants' communication skills have become more patient-centred during the forty-week programme. Ten GP trainees from Auckland having volunteered to participate in the research.

For further information about Stage I general practice education, contact Dr Pamela Hyde on 04-496 5988 or email: phyde@rnzcgp.org.nz.

Supporting General Practice

– Advanced Vocational Education Programme Revised

The College has revised its delivery of the Advanced Vocational Education Programme (AVE) to provide greater local support to general practitioners. Thirteen AVE Regional Facilitators have been appointed, including one national Maori Facilitator. These AVE Facilitators will provide advice and professional development assistance to all AVE candidates. This programme will be piloted throughout 2002 and reviewed in 2003.

Self-review of consultations is one of the most valuable learning experiences available for a general practitioner and the College has en-

couraged candidates to have some consultations videoed as part of the self-reviewing process. However, we recognise that there have been some barriers and concerns for some candidates about this process. The new AVE Facilitators can either provide support and assistance in this videoing process or discuss an alternative option to the videoed consultations review. AVE Facilitators will not be formally assessing candidates at any stage, but are there to provide practical support and advice. Information has been sent out to all candidates in early April.

Cover photo



Martin London (*above*) is the second winner of NZFP's photography competition.

His photo, featured on the cover of this issue, shows rural teamwork in action, with local volunteer ambulance staff, paramedics (arriving by helicopter), a rural fireman and a GP all attending a car accident.