



APHA Vital Signs

A WEEKLY ROUND-UP OF NEWS VITAL TO THE PRIVATE HOSPITAL INDUSTRY

22 November 2009

Health Reform Consultation

APHA has been successful in arranging a special consultation forum with the Minister for Health and Ageing the Hon Nicola Roxon MP on the challenges of health reform for Australia's future – with a focus on private health.

The forum will be held on 25 November at Parliament House and APHA will be represented by President Chris Rex, Vice-President Richard Royle, Director Christine Gee and CEO Michael Roff.

A report on this forum will be provided in next week's edition of Vital Signs.

Government is trying again to means test PHI Rebate

The Federal Government has re-introduced legislation designed to means test the Private Health Insurance Rebate and set up 10 tiers of health fund membership. The legislation was defeated in the Senate in September. APHA will continue to argue against any measure which penalises people who choose to take responsibility for their own health costs and potentially leads to greater pressure on the already overburdened public hospital system.

National Procedure Banding Schedule

The latest version of the National Procedure Banding Schedule is now available on the Members area of the APHA website. Members are advised to give particular attention to the **explanatory notes** section at the front of the Schedule as there are several items there to note.

Subscribers to the hard copy and CD version of the Schedule will receive their copies in the next week.

National Call for Regional Cancer Centres Applications

Applications for the Government's \$560 million Regional Cancer Centres are now open via a national advertising campaign. Eligible public or private organisations will be able to apply for infrastructure funding to establish new or enhanced regional cancer centres. Organisations wishing to apply for funding should obtain the Application Guidelines, Funding Application form, and supporting documentation by registering at the Department of Health and Ageing's website: www.health.gov.au/tenders. The closing date for applications is **Friday, 8 January 2010**.

The Application Guidelines incorporate the Regional Cancer Centres Guiding Principles, which were finalised following a public consultation process that took place in September and October.

Invitation to comment on the draft National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards

This week, APHA met with The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) to discuss issues relating to the draft National Safety and Quality Healthcare

Standards (NSQH Standards), and a draft guide to Peer Review.

The preliminary set of NSQH Standards addresses the following areas:

- *Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Service Organisations*
- *Healthcare Associated Infection*
- *Medication Safety*
- *Patient Identification and Procedure Matching*, and
- *Clinical Handover*.

The draft Standards are being developed as the nationally agreed safety and quality standards for use by all jurisdictions and health care organisations.

It is intended that the final set of the Standards will be sufficiently comprehensive to assess all key aspects of safety and quality in health care and will provide a guide to health service organisations of the level of care expected to be provided to improve overall patient care in Australia.

The draft guide 'Review by Peers: in professional and administrative process' is intended to be used as a tool by managers and health services to implement processes for the review of professional practice.

The Commission is particularly interested in receiving feedback from private hospitals on the draft NSQH Standards and the Peer Review Guide. These documents can be obtained from the Commission website www.safetyandquality.gov.au. The APHA Safety and Quality Taskforce will be preparing a consolidated response to both consultations. Members wishing to provide input should contact Barbara Carney at APHA.

TGA Provides Consumer Information on all Prescription Medicines

On 16 November, the Federal Government announced that the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has begun the process of posting on its website consumer information for all prescription medicines. The TGA website also contains the Product Information for medicines, which is designed to make it easier for health professionals to check the scientific information about a product.

The Consumer and Product Information can be found at: <https://www.ebs.tga.gov.au/>

Topics for articles for the 'Pharmacy Focus' section of *Private Hospital* magazine

In an effort to make the 'Pharmacy Focus' section of *Private Hospital* as useful and thought-provoking as possible, we value your ideas on topics or issues related to pharmacy and medication that you would like to read about in future editions.

These topics can be related to costs, safety, risk, quality, contracts, measurement, monitoring, new drugs, automation, in the area of pharmacy services, medication use etc.

Please send your requests or ideas (it could be as simple as an email with one or two words in addition to 'Pharmacy Focus') to [Lisa Ramshaw](mailto:lisa.ramshaw@apha.gov.au) who will pass these onto Michael Ryan.