Message from the chief nursing and midwifery officer – February 2016

This is the first newsletter for 2016. I trust you all had a safe and relaxing festive season. Already it is clear that 2016 will once again be a busy year in health. The work of Primary Health Networks (PHNs) continues to evolve and I hope that many nurses and midwives will be involved in these and other changes across the course of the year. I find that meeting with, and talking to, nurses and midwives across the country is particularly useful in my role, and as I travel to Brisbane, Adelaide and Sydney over the next month, I look forward to meeting some of you, and working with you throughout the year.

Until next month,

Debra

PBS prescriptions

Since 1 November 2010, authorised Nurse Practitioners and Midwives have been able to prescribe certain Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listed medicines for the medical treatment of their patients. Around ten new drugs, marketed as more than 50 brands of medicines that can be prescribed by authorised Nurse Practitioners and/or Midwives, have been recommended by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) and listed on the PBS as of 1 December 2015. These medicines are used for the treatment of conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Parkinson’s disease, mild to moderately severe Alzheimer disease, migraine attacks, gram-positive coccal infections, nausea and vomiting, hypertension, corticosteroid-responsive dermatoses, and gastro-oesophageal reflux disease. Further information on these medicines can be found on the PBS website.

Future of Australia’s aged care sector workforce

On 1 December 2015, the Senate referred the following matter to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee for inquiry and report: The future of Australia’s aged care sector workforce. Submissions should be received by 4 March 2016 and the reporting date is 30 June 2016. The terms of reference and committee secretariat contact details can be found here.

Subscribe for aged care updates

The Department of Health regularly sends email updates to help aged care providers stay in touch with changes to the sector. The subscription service offers any individual or organisation the option to opt-in to receive these important updates. There is no limit to the number of email addresses that can be subscribed either per organisation or in total. Any organisation in aged care is encouraged to subscribe at least one email address per organisation. This ensures key information is received as it becomes available. Visit the Department’s website to subscribe or to see more information including messages recently sent to the sector.

2016 ICN Global Nursing Leadership Institute

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has recently announced the invitation for applications to attend the 2016 Global Nursing Leadership Institute (GNLI). Interested nurses in senior or executive level positions from across the world can access all information and application forms on the GNLI website. The 2016 GNLI will take place from 17-23 September 2016 in Geneva.

New measures to encourage childhood immunisation

As a new school year gets underway, Minister for Health Sussan Ley is reminding parents of new measures to encourage families to keep their children’s vaccinations up to date. From this year, to continue receiving family assistance payments from the Commonwealth (Child Care Benefit, Child Care Rebate, and Family Tax Benefit Part A Supplement), children and young people up to 20 years of age must be fully immunized, on a catch-up schedule, or have an approved medical exemption. For more information, please go to the Department of Human Services Immunisation website or the Department of Health Immunisation website.

New national approach to dementia support

The Australian Government recently announced the next phase in a new national approach to programmes and services supporting people with dementia and their carers. Minister for Aged Care, Sussan Ley, said the restructure follows the findings of last year’s Analysis of Dementia Programmes report which showed what was working well and what can be improved. For the entire media release, please click here.
NMBA communiqué

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia has published its December communiqué. Please click here to access the document.

National Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care

In 2015, the Department of Health commissioned the Lowitja Institute to develop a National CQI Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care. The purpose of the Framework is to “…foster commitment and a coordinated approach to CQI in primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, where ever and whenever they seek care”. It defines medium to long term strategic directions, supports planning by governments and service providers, provides a basis for shared learning and will guide national implementation of CQI. The draft Framework is currently in its final stages of consultation and following endorsement will be published in the first half of 2016. Watch this space!

Healthy for Life programme expansion

The Department of Health has a long history of supporting quality improvement and safety in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care, commencing in 2002 with Continuous Improvement Projects. In 2006, the Department rolled out Healthy for Life, which was the first widespread population health programme based on the principles of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). The 2014 Federal Budget included $36 million over three years to expand the Healthy for Life programme in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS). This will result in ACCHS nationally who provide primary health care services receiving funding to support CQI initiatives within their service.

MBS Review – consultation on obsolete items

A number of MBS items have already been identified by the Clinical Committees as obsolete. That is, these items or services which have no clinical purpose in contemporary practice, the services identified are better covered under other items, or the items are no longer used for the purpose for which they were introduced. There are 23 MBS items recommended for removal in this first stage of work and we would like your views on this first set of recommendations before final decisions are made. You are invited to provide feedback using the Citizen Space online consultation tool. Consultations close on 8 February 2016.

Publications


Mailbox

If you have any feedback or would like to contact the Office of the Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer, please email the new, central CNMO mailbox at cnmo@health.gov.au.