

Changes to PLWHA Staffing and office hours

By Mandi Collins

In an effort to address focus area one of the AAC's strategic plan for 2010 - 2013, some changes are being made in PLWHA ACT. The aim of this focus area is to strengthen peer-based networks for individuals and communities affected by HIV. Towards this end, as of 30th August, 2010 Mandi will move from AAC Administration to take up a position as a Project Worker. Mandi's project will focus on finding service gaps/needs for people living with HIV in Canberra and the surrounding regions. Three targets groups will be focused on for this project, they are positive women, non-engaged PLHIV and PLHIV in poor health.

We believe that the outcome of this project will be most valuable for PLWHA ACT as we continue to deliberate on how we will evolve to meet future needs and to encourage greater participation by the positive community. It is also hoped that Mandi's appointment will encourage more HIV positive women to come and visit the office and become involved with PLWHA ACT.

Due to Mandi's appointment we are happy to advise our members that opening hours for PLWHA ACT will be extended. The office will now be opened Monday – Friday from 10am until 3pm. Mandi will be in the office on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and Mick will man the office on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

P.S.N dinners will be moved to Wednesday evening from the 13th October, 2010. PSN lunches will still continue to be held on Wednesday but from 1st October they will also be held on Friday's from 12 noon until 2pm each day.

PLWHA would like to acknowledge the support that has been given to us by AAC. Provision has been made for extra funding to pay for the Project Workers' Position and the resources to conduct this project. For me, this is an exciting time to be a part of PLWHA ACT and the evolution of our organisation. It is also encouraging to be working so closely with the AAC in supporting people with HIV to live to the fullest of their ability.

Changes to Vitamins & Supplements Service

An affordable vitamins and supplements service is now available for HIV positive men and women in our area. The AIDS Action Council of the ACT now provides quality vitamins and supplements at discounted prices to improve the health and wellbeing of people with HIV.

Some popular products include multivitamins, Co-enzyme Q10, Sustagen and a range of other nutritional supplements.

To access this service you will need a letter stating your requirements from your doctor or a

Dietitian who specialises in HIV.

The AIDS Action Council has a HIV Dietitian who visits Westlund House every three months, if you require an appointment please give us a call. For those on a Disability Support Pension or Centrelink Benefits that entitle them to a Health Care Card, their contribution will be \$5.00 for dispensing fee. For others, including those in the workforce, products are available at 50% of our cost price. There are monthly limits on the amount of products that you can access, but these are very generous.

For further information on accessing the AAC Vitamins and Supplements Service, phone (02) 6257-2855 or email marcus@aidSACTION.org.au

Contents

1. PLWHA changes.
2. Bowling night
- 3-4. P.B.S Script
5. Nurse Philip
6. Brenda's Blenda.

POSITIVELY is a regular publication for people living with HIV/AIDS in the ACT and surrounding districts. Currently we are looking for people to assist us with the publication e.g. writing groups. No experience is necessary as we will provide training in all aspects of publishing from writing articles through to the printing stage. If you can spare a couple of hours from time to time please drop into the office for a chat or give us a call. Positively is a monthly publication produced within the ACT with funding from the ACT Dept of Health. Submissions for the next edition are due on **Friday 24th September**. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, publisher, nor PLWHA ACT.

PLWHA Ten Pin Bowling Night

The first day of Spring saw some members of PLWHA ACT heading for the AMF bowling centre in Belconnen to ritually slaughter ten pins in celebration. It would seem that bowling is still a very popular sport because we could only book one lane, out of the 32 lanes available, and only for two hours. As the six of us appeared to be the only ones not actually in a bowling league, we were given a nice quiet lane right up the far end where we wouldn't be disturbed. Well, one expects peace and quiet in a bowling alley, doesn't one.



The other positive bowlers who attended, Kenn, Mandi, Cathy, Pete, and Mick, eyed my ball bag with suspicion as I unpacked and prepared to trounce the opposition. Sometimes just having a ball bag can intimidate the opposition sufficiently in my experience. When I pulled out my one big sparkly green 12-pounder, there were gasps of concern all round. However, I assured everyone that it was supposed to be green and we all relaxed into a great game of ten pin bowling.

We played the first of two games (1 game = 10 frames) on Lane 1 and I think we all surprised ourselves by how well we did. Fortunately, these days you don't do the scoring yourself at a bowling alley so we were able to concentrate on

chatting and giggling while The Machine did the boring bits for us. For the second game we were moved to the lane at the opposite end of the bowling alley where Cathy requested those bumpers that you can get to cover up the side gutters. This made her a formidable foe indeed as nobody else thought of this tactic.

Did anyone bowl backwards into the crowd? Yes. Do you want to know who? Well, that would be indiscreet, as both Cathy and Pete would agree. Mandi and Mick demonstrated the sheer stamina that we have come to recognise and depend upon, although Mick has since suggested that there will be a memorial service for his knees and ankles in the near future. No flowers. Kenn was consistently powerful in style and technique, and he certainly kept The Machine busy adding up those spares and strikes, but in the end I won.

The bowling alley staff never seemed to have a moment to themselves and yet they were very friendly and were able to answer questions or help with mechanical problems with no fuss at all, and I like that in this day and age. Join us next time for a truly fun night out.

Geoff P.



What's on a PBS script?

Every time your doctor gives you a prescription, the form contains certain standard information. The [diagram below](#) shows the standard form that doctors use each time they prescribe a medicine under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). You will be given two copies of the form to take to the pharmacist. If the doctor has written the prescription by hand rather than by computer, the form will look different but will contain the same information.

Prescription form

- Date prescription written
- Brand substitution box
- Medicine name, strength and form (tablets, cream, etc)
- Dosage instructions and warnings (if any)
- Number of repeat prescriptions authorised
- Quantity of medicine per prescription

Medicine details

Usually only one name - the active ingredient name or the brand name - will appear on the prescription form. Both names will usually appear on the repeat authorisation form. The dosage instructions - how much and how often the medicine should be taken - will often be written in doctor shorthand on the prescription form. The pharmacist will convert these instructions into plain English on the medicine's label and on any repeat forms. Some common examples of doctor shorthand and their meanings are shown in the [box below](#).

Doctor prescription shorthand	Meaning
bd/bid	Take twice daily
tds/tid	Take three times a day
qid/qds	Take four times a day
mane	take in morning
nocte	take at night
prn	take as needed

Number of repeats

The number of repeat prescriptions you are allowed will only appear on the prescription form if additional courses of the medicine have been ordered by the doctor. The repeat authorisation form will show how many repeat prescriptions were ordered, and how many prescriptions have already been filled. It will also show how many repeat prescriptions you have left. Keeping track of this number can remind you when it's time to go back to your doctor for a new prescription.

Continued from page 3

The [diagram below](#) shows a repeat prescription form. If the doctor has authorised any repeat prescriptions, your pharmacist will give you one of these forms, usually in a small folded wallet, when you pick up your medicine. You will get a new form each time you get a repeat filled.

Repeat prescription form

- Number of repeat prescriptions left
- Medicine name, strength and form (tablets, cream, etc)
- Quantity of medicine per prescription
- Dosage instructions and warnings (if any)
- Number of repeat prescriptions already filled
- Date prescription written
- Number of repeat prescriptions authorised
- Date when prescription expires

Prescription date

The prescription date is important. The prescription and any repeats must be filled within 12 months of this date.

The repeat authorisation form may also give the date after which the prescription cannot be filled.

Brand substitution box

If the brand substitution box is not marked, the pharmacist may ask you if you would like a different brand of the medicine stated on the form.

More drugs for your script

HIV s100 doctors are now able to prescribe up to two months supply plus five repeats of HIV drugs, under changes introduced by Medicare on 1 July. While previously limited to prescribing one month's supply with two repeats, now doctors have more flexibility in determining what they think is right for the patient. So, someone stable

The information in *MedicinesTalk* is not medical advice, so seek professional help before making any decisions based on this information.

This article was accurate and up-to-date when it was published. The evidence or context for this article might have changed since then. *MedicinesTalk* is a free quarterly newsletter for consumers written by consumers about using medicines wisely. Subscribe to the hard copy version using our [online ordering system](#), or write to MedicinesTalk, National Prescribing Service Limited, PO Box 1147, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012.

on therapy may be able to fill two months supply at a time from a hospital pharmacy. NAPWA will monitor how the arrangements work across different pharmacies for any unexpected problems. If you require more information please consult your Doctor.

Article reprinted from Positive Living Magazine

Dear Nurse Philip

I have been on HIV medications for many years and have learned about the side effects one can get from taking one prescription drug with another prescription drug. What I have been hearing a lot about lately is the side effects we can also get from taking some Herbal and alternative medications with our HIV drugs. Can you give me some information about some of those side effects and the most common alternative medications that I should be careful with.

Cheers H

Yes, that's right; there can be important interactions between some complementary therapy substances and antiretroviral therapy (ART).

Drug interactions can take two forms. The first (pharmacokinetic) occurs when one substance alters the drug levels of the other one; this happens by altering enzyme activity, which changes the actual structure of the drug or alters the way a drug is absorbed, distributed through the body or eliminated. The second type of drug interaction (pharmacodynamic) occurs when there is some interaction between the drugs' effects. For example, if two substances with similar effects are taken together, their additive result may become problematic, or if two drugs have opposing effects, the therapeutic benefit may be cancelled out.

An unexpected pharmacokinetic effect of a natural product can be found with grapefruit juice. In the early days of ART, some people were encouraged to drink grapefruit juice to boost the saquinavir levels in their blood. Also, it was found that grapefruit juice could decrease the blood concentrations of indinavir. Although these medications are not used much these days, this indicates that these interactions don't follow an obvious pattern; it's only by understanding the way that the body handles these medications that the reasons for these interactions become apparent.

The herbal treatment that seems to have the broadest and most significant pharmacokinetic interaction with other therapies is St John's Wort. This herb is sometimes used to treat (amongst other things), mild to moderate depression and anxiety. St John's Wort has been found to decrease the blood levels of some Protease Inhibitors and Non-Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors. Garlic supplements have been found to have a similar effect (this does not apply to garlic used in standard cooking quantities). Other complementary therapies that have been

thought to change blood levels of ART include high dose Vitamin C, Ginkgo biloba, Echinacea, hops and milk thistle. There may also be other agents used in complementary therapy that also alter ART levels.

Complementary therapy agents (as well as prescribed medications) can have their own side effects; it is therefore helpful to be aware of this. If, for example, if someone had abnormal liver function tests or was taking ART containing an agent that caused liver problems, it would be unwise to also use a herbal treatment that was known to cause liver damage. You and your doctor need to be aware of the likelihood of these pharmacodynamic interactions.

Tap into your doctor's knowledge of prescribed medications to answer questions about drug interactions. Your doctor's medical software programs can help to predict adverse interactions. Printed materials (including product information, community organization publications and education resources from pharmaceutical companies) can be helpful too. In addition, there are a number of internet resources, (such as <http://www.hiv-druginteractions.org>) that can be useful in working out whether to expect an interaction between alternative therapies and prescription and non-prescription agents.

Some imported herbal products have not been subjected to rigorous production standards and have been found to contain harmful contaminants, such as arsenic. So, just because something is stated to be natural doesn't mean that it is safe. You should also give critical attention to evidence for the effectiveness of your therapies. This includes how you respond to the treatment, reports from others, information from health practitioners and also from scientific trials. You don't want to be taking anything unnecessarily.

There is another important reason for your doctor to know what alternative therapies you are taking; this information can indicate which aspects of your health you see as being problematic. For example, a doctor might be prompted to ask more about depression if their patient mentions that they have been taking St John's Wort.

So discussing your alternative therapies with your doctor can be a way to increase communication and to reduce the risk of possible interactions and other problems with your treatments.

Brenda's Blenda

Perfect Bread – Butter Pudding

It's not often I have a recipe for a sweet dish as it's so often cheaper to buy packet & frozen sweets from the supermarket.

I came across an old recipe that my mother made and was a favorite of the whole family.

You will need:

1. 8 slices of buttered bread (Crust off, buttered one side only)
2. 2oz Sultanas
3. Grated rind of one lemon
4. 1 pint of milk
5. 2 eggs
6. 2 tbs of brown sugar

How to prepare

Cut bread into 3in squares and put half into an ovenproof dish. Sprinkle with half of the sultanas and half of the Lemon rind. Add the rest of the bread and cover the surface with the remaining Sultanas and Lemon rind. Beat the eggs with milk and sugar and pour over the bread. Leave to stand for 30 minutes.

Place the dish in a baking dish with at least 1 ½ of water in its base and bake in a medium oven for 30 minutes or until brown on top.

You can add nutmeg or some glace cherries or some apricot chunks.

It's the easiest recipe ever and can be served warm or cold with whipped cream & ice cream.

Enjoy;

Love Brenda.



Volunteers wanted

Yes it's that time of year again; Fair day is being held this year on Saturday 30th

October and PLWHA will be running their Sausage Sizzle again. This event is PLWHA's major fund raiser for the year so it's essential that we have some great Volunteers to help run the stall throughout the day so all those members that can help out please give us a call here at PLWHA on 62574985.

Tuesday 2nd November

PLWHA will be holding a Melbourne cup lunch at Westlund House starting at 12 midday. Come along and eat all you want and you can then go to food confessions with Jenny McDonald who will be running her Dietician Clinic at Westlund House on the same day

Please R.S.V.P on 62574985



PLWHA–COMING EVENTS

October 2010

October dates for P.S.N light lunches

Wednesdays 6th/13th/20th/27th.

Lunches will be held at Westlund House unless stated otherwise from 12-2pm.

Fridays 8th/15th/22nd/29th.

Lunches will be held at Westlund House unless stated otherwise from 12-2pm.



Wednesday 13th October

P.S.N Dinner starting at 6pm

Westlund House



Wednesday 27th October

P.S.N Dinner Starting at 6pm

Westlund house

Please Note

As from October 6th PSN light lunches will be held at Westlund House On **Wednesdays** and

Friday's from 12-2pm

November 2010

November dates for P.S.N light lunches

Wednesdays 3rd/10th/17th/24th.

Lunches will be held at Westlund House unless stated otherwise from 12-2pm

Fridays 5th/12th/19th/26th.

Lunches will be held at Westlund House unless stated otherwise from 12-2pm



Tuesday 2nd November

Dietitian Clinic Westlund House

9.15am-3.15pm

Lunch will also be provided.



Wednesday 10th November

P.S.N Dinner starting at 6pm

Westlund House



Wednesday 24th November

P.S.N Dinner starting at 6pm

Westlund House



Dietitian Clinic



Jenny McDonald is a well known HIV Dietitian and Treatments Officer and has worked in the area of HIV nutrition for many years.

Jenny will be in Canberra on Tuesday 2nd November to conduct a Dietitian Clinic at Westlund House Resource Centre. Appointments are available from 9.15am ,to discuss bookings please call

0262572855.

Positive Support Services in the ACT and surrounding areas

People Living With HIV/AIDS

ACT

Provides support for HIV+ people in the ACT through a newsletter and links with other PLWHA organisations throughout Australia. We also provide individual support with advocacy and representation on health and other issues, and referral to other agencies. Ph 6257 4985

Positive Support Network

HIV+ people get together to offer support and share information. PSN is mostly a social occasion where people can share the experience of being HIV+ over a free meal, without the formality of a structured meeting. Dinner on alternate Tuesdays. Ph 6257 4985.

Positive Women's Group

The Positive Women's Group meets for social activities throughout the year. For information on the group's gatherings or if you would like to suggest some activities contact Marcus, Nada or Stephanie on 6257 2855.

Trevor Daley Fund

The Fund provides assistance for people with HIV/AIDS who are experiencing financial hardship, for the part payment of bills, a treatments allowance and some other costs. Applications can be made to the TDF Committee by any service provider. For more information call the TDF on 6257 2855.

Counselling

Stephanie Buckle is the AIDS Action Council counsellor. Free consultation available to all HIV+ people, their partners, carers or significant others. Phone 6257 2855 to make an appointment.

Jane Keany is the counsellor for the ACT Division of General Practice HIV/AIDS Program, and offers subsidised counselling

services for people infected with or affected by HIV, their significant others and people at risk of HIV infection. Jane is available at the Interchange General Practice. Phone 6257 3004 or 0402 222 408 to make an appointment

Health Maintenance and Treatments Information

All enquires to Marcus or Nada
Phone 6257 2855

Treataware www.treataware.info

Nutrition

Consultation with a Dietitian from The Canberra Hospital is available free at the Canberra Sexual Health Centre. Appointments necessary. Phone Canberra Sexual Health on 62442184.

An HIV specialist nutritionist from Melbourne will be visiting quarterly. For further info contact Nada or Mick on 6257 2855

Canberra Sexual Health Centre

Co-located with The Canberra Hospital. Free service available (no Medicare card is required) for testing and treatment of STIs, HIV clinic and counselling for issues such as safe sex, relationships and sexual functioning problems. Walk-in consultations available for urgent matters. Call on 6244 2184 to make an appointment.

Library

PLWHA and the AAC have an extensive range of books and videos for your enjoyment.

Educational books on HIV issues, cooking, Sci-Fi and general reading material, just to name a few of the areas covered. If you would like to borrow any of them please see Lynn or Mandi at the AAC reception desk who will sign them out to you and explain the borrowing conditions. We also have a number of new books in the library this month.

Greater Southern Area Sexual Health and Hep C Service

GSAHS Queanbeyan Sexual Health Service

For Appointment

Ph- 02-6298 9233

Aboriginal Sexual Health HIV/AIDS Worker

Sharyn Medway

Ph 02-4827 3913 Mobile 0429 985 606

Sexual Health Nurses

Christine Taylor - South Coast, Batemans Bay - Eden

Ph- 02-4476 2344 Mobile 0427 219 874

Queanbeyan-Goulburn Region

Ph- 02-6298 9213 mobile 042 789 3247

Margaret Traill

Albury 02 6058 1839

Robyn Ridley & Sally Anne Brennan

Wagga Wagga 02 6938 6492

Sally Daveron

Griffith 02 6966 9930

Clinical Nurse Consultant

Alison Kincaid Albury 02 6058 1831

Sexual Health Physician

Dr Katherine Turner

Ph 6298 9213

HIV/AIDS Related Programs Manager

Michael Bolton

Ph: 02 6923 5774

The Fine Print

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