Dear Partner

We are pleased to advise that a number of activities have progressed significantly since the last E-newsletter in August 2016. This update is provided for your information.

**NCSP: Guidelines for the Management of Screen Detected Abnormalities, Screening in Specific Populations and Investigation of Abnormal Vaginal Bleeding (2016 Guidelines)**

The Cancer Council Australia has finalised the clinical management guidelines for the renewed National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) and work has commenced on a dissemination plan. The Guidelines have also received endorsement by the key Colleges RACGP, RANZCOG, RCPA and Societies, ASCCP and ASGO. The final Guidelines will not be released publicly until the appropriate supporting resources are developed early in February 2017. The finalised Guidelines will then be published on Cancer Council Australia’s wiki platform, which will allow them to be updated as new evidence becomes available. They will also be available in PDF format.

**National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council Standards**

- The National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council’s (NPAAC) Cervical Screening Drafting Committee is currently progressing the draft quality standards for cervical screening tests, including human papillomavirus (HPV) testing.
- NPAAC is aware of the time pressures and sector’s concerns relating to the implementation of the NCSP and is expediting the progression of the draft Requirements through the NPAAC committee process. The Department continues to support this independent expert advisory committee’s activities as part of the national pathology accreditation program.

**Medicare Benefits Schedule Items for cervical screening**

- The Department is working with the Pathology Clinical Committee (PCC) and the Pathology Business Group (PBG) to finalise the item descriptors and fees to support the renewed NCSP. The new item descriptors are expected to be finalised in November 2016, and the associated fees are expected to be finalised early in the new year.
- Proposed MBS items descriptors were released in 2014 as part of the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) Public Summary Document for the Renewal Application 1276 (accessed at [www.msac.gov.au](http://www.msac.gov.au)).

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Changes are being made taking into account the 2016 NCSP Guidelines recommendations and feedback from the Anatomical and Cytology Working Group of PCC.

An independent consultant will be engaged to work with the PBG and the Department to undertake a costing analysis to determine accurate pricing of the new items. This work will be informed by MSAC cost modelling.

Workforce and Practice Change

A number of activities have progressed to support workforce and practice change, including:

- The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia continues to implement their Pathology Workforce Change project to support the transition from conventional Pap testing to HPV testing with reflex liquid based cytology. An external provider has undertaken a needs analysis to determine transition and support services required for the transition to the NCSP renewal. Workshops for pathology providers are currently underway.
- The NPS MedicineWise project to develop Online and Practical training for healthcare professionals is progressing. An expert advisory group comprised of members from key colleges and associations with an interest in cervical screening is providing feedback and input into the development of the product. These will be available in 2017.
- Cancer Council Australia has been contracted to develop an online Toolkit for Engaging with under-screened and never-screened women in the NCSP for health care professionals. Work is progressing on the development of both hard copy and online resources for the renewed NCSP for both health care professionals and consumers.

Communications

A number of products to support the Renewal are under development including new program branding (i.e. new logo, images and tagline). Concept testing of draft communications materials with women and health care professionals took place in September. It is expected that the resources for Health Care Professionals and consumers will be progressively available from February 2017.

Quality and Safety

The Quality and Safety Monitoring Committee is considering protocols for monitoring the safety of the new program. The Quality Framework for the NCSP is almost finalised and should be available in February 2017.

More information

Further information on the Renewal can be found at cancerscreening.gov.au and you are welcome to contact us at CervicalRenewal@health.gov.au if you have any queries.

*Partners are also encouraged to contact us via email if you would like to be added to the Pathology Update e-Newsletter mailing list.

The newsletter’s aim is to update our Partners regarding the progress of the Renewal. If you do not wish to receive the E-newsletter, please let us know and we will remove you from our mailing list. You are also welcome to share this information with your colleagues.

Cervical Renewal Secretariat
On behalf of Professor Ian Hammond
Chair, Steering Committee for the Renewal Implementation Project

Please note a separate update on the development of the National Cancer Screening Register (NCSR) and the supporting NCSR Legislation will be provided shortly.