Dear Partner

We are pleased to advise that a number of Renewal activities have progressed since the last e-newsletter in October 2016. You are welcome to share this information with your colleagues.

Communications

- As you can see from the top of this newsletter the National Cervical Screening Program has a new logo that was endorsed by the Standing Committee on Screening of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council following market testing. A range of online and printed materials communicating the changes to the program are being developed for women and healthcare professionals. It is expected that these resources will be progressively available from February 2017.

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

- The final 2016 Guidelines for the renewed National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) will be released publicly in February 2017 on the Cancer Council Australia’s wiki platform.

Workforce and Practice Change

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

- 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 February 2017.

- 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.

- Cancer Council Australia is developing an online Toolkit for Engaging with under - screened and never - screened women in the renewed NCSP for health care professionals and consumers. Work is progressing on the development of online and downloadable resources that will be available from May 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.

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 and the associated fees are expected to be finalised early 2017.

National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council Standards

- The Requirements for Laboratories Reporting Cervical Screening Tests (First Edition 20xx) sets out the standards for using Human Papillomavirus (HPV) nucleic acid testing as the primary screening method for cervical cancer screening, with reflex liquid based cytology when oncogenic HPV is detected. The document needs to be read in conjunction with the NPAAC accreditation framework, in particular the Requirements for Medical Pathology Services, Requirements for the Supervision of Pathology Laboratories and Requirements for Medical Testing of Microbial Nucleic Acids. This is in addition to the 2016 Guidelines.

- The draft Requirements for Laboratories Reporting Cervical Screening Tests (First Edition 20xx) was released on mid October 2016 for public consultation. Submissions were received from a broad range of pathology stakeholders and interested parties, including key professional organisations, pathology professionals and manufacturers of test kits. All of the issues raised in the public consultation submissions have recently been considered and a final standard is being progressed through the NPAAC committee process and necessary regulatory processes as quickly as possible. This is to ensure a reasonable transition time period prior to the proposed implementation date of 1 May 2017, which is in line with the implementation of the NCSP program. All pathology stakeholders and interested parties will be advised when the final pathology accreditation standard is available. The Department continues to support this independent expert advisory committee’s activities as part of the national pathology accreditation program.

For more information:

- On the Renewal of the National Cervical Screening Program: Go to cancerscreening.gov.au
  You are welcome to contact us at CervicalRenewal@health.gov.au if you have any queries.

- On the changes to the Pathology sector: Contact us via email if you would like to be added to the Pathology Update e-Newsletter mailing list.


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

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