

STOP PRESS!! IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

LATE EFFECTS of POLIO ASSESSMENT CLINIC FOR NEW SOUTH WALES

by Merle Thompson, Secretary

AT LAST, after something like 15 years of trying we can announce that we have a clinic established in New South Wales which will provide an assessment program for polio survivors.

Background

Some members will remember that back in the 1990s there was a clinic at Prince Henry Hospital with Dr Jill Middleton as a rehabilitation specialist. Dr Middleton was later joined by Dr Pesi Katrak. This was not a multi-disciplinary service and referrals had to be made for any other assessments or treatments. Dr Middleton was able to join us for our 25th Anniversary Lunch in December and those of us who had benefited from her assessment and advice were thrilled to catch up with her.

When I went to Amsterdam last year to the European Polio Conference one of the most significant issues for me was the realisation that most of the polio survivors and the medical and allied health professionals who were there, particularly those from across western Europe, all took it for granted that everyone had an outpatient clinic in which there was a multi-disciplinary team with knowledge of the Late Effects of Polio. Many were researching the needs of polio survivors and considering new techniques to assist them.

The Polio NSW Management Committee has been trying over the years to interest successive governments in providing a clinic but without any positive result. I was asked to consider other options and was wondering about approaching the private sector then in a “great minds think alike experience” Nola Buck attended Mt Wilga Private Hospital, a rehabilitation hospital, and realised there might be a possibility of a polio clinic in that setting.

Nola and I have exchanged documents and met with Dr Helen Mackie and Dr Joanna Murray who are rehabilitation physicians. Dr Mackie has submitted a proposal to the hospital board and they have accepted it. The Polio NSW Management Committee has also endorsed the proposal. **Now the clinic can become a reality!!!**

Mt Wilga Private Hospital is a private specialist rehabilitation hospital in Hornsby providing Inpatient and Day Patient (Ambulatory) and Neuro-rehabilitation programs. Personnel include neuro and ortho-physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dieticians, psychologists, speech therapists and exercise physiologists. Orthotic consultations can be arranged.

[Visit <www.mtwilgaprivate.com.au> or search for “Mt Wilga Private Hospital” on YouTube]



What is being offered?

The initial assessment is a three-hour process involving sessions with:

- Rehabilitation physician
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational therapist

The aim of the assessment is to give you a comprehensive review of your physical and functional abilities and to make recommendations for maintaining or improving those abilities.

What will it cost?

The costs for the initial assessment would be:

a. Rehabilitation Physician Prolonged Assessment under Medicare Item 132:	bulk billed
b. Physiotherapy Initial Assessment: Outpatient cost	\$ 120
c. Occupational Initial Assessment: Outpatient cost	\$ 140
Report cost	\$ 70
Total cost (out of pocket)	\$ 330

These costs can be offset if you have a GP Chronic Condition form for Allied Health sessions or you have private health fund membership with extras cover. The actual amount you pay will depend on the type and level of health fund cover you have or other assistance to which you are entitled. With some health funds it might be no cost or there might be a co-payment as low as \$50.

If you are covered by the Enhanced Primary Care Scheme you may be able to access additional services or get them at a reduced rate.

What happens after the assessment?

A **Combined Multidisciplinary Clinic Report** including recommendations will be forwarded to you and your GP.

- If the report recommends associated services which Mt Wilga can provide, you would be able to access these services. The cost would be as per your individual private health fund cover or as per an individual quote for self-funded services. These services include dietician; speech pathologist; psychologist; social worker; orthotist. Similar conditions apply if you need radiology or pathology.
- Admission as an in-patient can be arranged if necessary. Again the costs would depend on the type and level of your private health fund or would need to be self-funded.
- On-going and periodic therapy with return visits can be possible.
- If the report recommends on-going and periodic therapy and you do not live where you can easily access Mt Wilga, referrals can be made to services, such as a physiotherapist, in your own area. In these circumstances, the Mt Wilga staff will be able to consult with your therapist and discuss the polio-specific issues of your treatment.
- Catered accommodation is available at a cost of \$70 per night. Unfortunately this is not wheelchair accessible.

How do I access the clinic?

- Step 1:** Ring Mt Wilga with an enquiry for assessment in the LEOp Clinic - phone Lara on 9847 5016.
- Step 2:** An Information Sheet about the LEOp Assessment Clinic and Questionnaire will be sent by post or email.
The questionnaire includes a request for GP referral to Dr Joanna Murray.
- Step 3:** Arrange an appointment with your GP and obtain a referral to Dr Joanna Murray.
- Step 4:** If you are eligible, obtain a GP Chronic Condition form for Allied Health sessions.
- Step 5:** Return the Questionnaire and GP referral to the Clinic.
- Step 6:** Ring Lara again and make an appointment.
- Step 7:** After your assessment go back to your GP to discuss your Report and plan any required services.

Note: It is possible to have a referral from a physiotherapist but it wouldn't be valid for as long and is not adequate for Medicare. However, if you are currently having physio treatment it would be helpful to take information provided by your physiotherapist.

I told my own GP that we were finalising arrangements for the establishment of the clinic and that I would like to be the "first cab off the rank". She was very pleased to hear of the Clinic and said she would definitely give me a referral. "*Just find out what they would like in the referral and come back and I will write it*". Why not have a chat with your GP?

I have agreed with Dr Mackie that I will assist by being the contact person for members who go to the clinic to give me feedback which will help Mt Wilga assess the success of the Clinic.

As the process goes further we will keep you informed.



2015 Mid-Year Seminar Notification

by Anne O'Halloran, Seminar Co-ordinator

"**Retirement Living Choices for People with a Disability**" is the title of our Mid-Year Metropolitan Seminar to be held on Wednesday, 3rd June 2015, at Northcott in Parramatta.

The theme for this Seminar will cover issues that arise when we are considering future living choices so that we can maintain a level of independence when day-to-day living becomes more of a challenge. We may be thinking of downsizing to smaller, more manageable, accommodation, or a retirement village or just considering more in-home services so that we can stay in our present home.

The Seminar will include speakers from State and Commonwealth government departments to inform us about services available and imminent changes. These presentations will be in the morning sessions.

The afternoon session will take the form of a panel of speakers from our membership, some of whom have moved in recent years to a retirement village and who will talk briefly about their experiences.

We are hoping that members in the audience who have downsized, or chosen services for home, will contribute to the afternoon session by sharing their experiences and comments.