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Adult immunisation receives a boost - 2009 GSK Adult Immunisation Grant recipients announced

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) announced the winners of the GSK Adult Immunisation Grants today at the 2009 Australian General Practice Network Forum in Sydney.

The four organisations each received \$20,000 to support their plans to increase adult immunisation in their community. This year GSK has made available a total of \$80,000 to support the development of innovative adult immunisation programs around Australia.

Dr Peter Eizenberg, Executive Director, NE Valley Division of General Practice and Chair of the judging panel, presented the grants on behalf of GSK and said "this year's entries demonstrated a high level of innovation and fresh thinking among healthcare professionals with respect to immunisation."

"Fifty entries were received this year from a wide range of organisations involved in immunisation. Given this year has been particularly busy for immunisation providers with pertussis outbreaks and swine flu, this number of entries clearly demonstrates how passionate people are about improving adult immunisation rates in Australia," Dr Eizenberg said.

This year four categories were open for entries. The successful grant recipients were:

General Practice, Central Clinic, SA: for their proposal aimed at reducing the number of pertussis cases within the adult population. The program uses an innovative method to target an 'at risk' population through the use of disease awareness promotion to encourage booster vaccination uptake.

"When we first received the flyer to apply for the grant, I didn't really think it would be possible to win, but I became passionate about the increased rate of whooping cough we had in our community and how we could address this," said practice nurse, Mrs Kathryn Hindmarsh.

"This is going to mean a great deal to our community in helping to reduce the number of cases of whooping cough and improve awareness of the need to have a booster immunisation in adulthood."

Division of General Practice: WA GP Network and GP Down South, WA: for their proposed division-based trial vaccination program for general practices that aims to increase uptake of vaccines for staff at risk of occupationally acquired, vaccine preventable disease. This program will provide a template for other Divisions and other workplace settings.

"Winning this grant has given WA GP Network and GP Down South the opportunity to develop a program to help general practices improve the immunisation status of their health care workers. This program will potentially limit the spread of vaccine preventable diseases within the workplace and to susceptible members of the public," said program coordinator, Ms Denise Puddick.

Indigenous Health: Yorke Peninsula Division of General Practice, SA: for their proposal to identify the barriers limiting the uptake of adult pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations in Indigenous communities. This program was selected because of its grassroots approach in engaging stakeholders to develop strategies to address these barriers, enhance awareness about the benefits of vaccines and increase vaccination uptake in the community. It is hoped that this program will be transferable to other Indigenous communities.

"We are very excited about the opportunity to implement our adult immunisation program. Immunisation uptake is a significant issue in Indigenous health and by identifying strategies to overcome these barriers we hope to not only improve immunisation rates but also share our learnings with other areas," said Ms Glenda Woodward, Immunisation coordinator, Yorke Peninsula Division of General Practice.

Local Council/ Community Organisation/ Hospital: Dousta Galla Community Health Service (CHS) and Melbourne GP Network, Victoria: This program aims to increase the uptake of hepatitis B vaccination within the migrant community by providing offsite immunisation at the Adult English Language School, Flagstaff.. This program addresses an unmet need in the community, targeting a high risk population, and is implemented through collaboration with the local division of General Practice.

"We are delighted to be able to offer our clients, who are often from marginalised or low social-economic backgrounds, the opportunity to receive and additionally be educated about the importance of hepatitis B vaccination. This is a serious issue in our community, receiving this award further expands and complements our existing services. It also allows the medical team to participate in activities that are not usually remunerated through Medicare. We are thankful to GSK for this opportunity to work collaboratively as a team and with the Melbourne General Practice Network," Janina De Silva, Practice Manager, Dousta Galla CHS said.

The GSK Adult Immunisation Grants are offered every two years and will be open for applications again in 2011. In alternate years, applications are invited to the GSK Childhood Immunisation Awards which recognise best practice and innovation in childhood immunisation. GlaxoSmithKline encourages all those passionate about making improvements in child and adult immunisation to apply for an award and put their ideas into action.

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