



## **PREVENTING OBESITY FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD: Translating Research into Practice Approaches for Enhancing Cross Sector Collaboration**

Dear Wheatbelt GP Network,

### **Re: Starting Childhood Obesity Prevention Early (SCOPE) Project**

The Child Health Promotion Research Centre (CHPRC) at Edith Cowan University has been funded by Healthway and the Department of Health to develop, implement and evaluate a pilot project to assist parents to promote healthy weight in young children.

The issue of rising rates of childhood overweight and obesity in Australia are well-established and unless this issue is addressed through prevention, healthcare systems will become rapidly overwhelmed. In response, our research and consultation has identified the antenatal and infancy period as a critical time for parental engagement for the development of healthy family lifestyles and thus prevention of childhood obesity. Key stakeholders have identified the need for a user friendly web-site and support materials to promote healthy parent and family lifestyles during pregnancy and until their child is one year old. The website will aim to provide consistent messages to parents, while also offering parent support providers (GPs, obstetricians, child health nurses, practice nurses, and allied health care providers) with relevant information.

General practitioners and practice nurses are key primary care providers for young families, and as such we are keen to conduct interviews (telephone or face-to-face) with GPs and interviews or focus groups with practice nurses in each of the project's pilot locations (Swan, Rockingham, Kwinana, Mandurah, Northam and Narrogin). Our main aim is to find out GPs' and practice nurses' opinions on what information is required by women and parents during the perinatal and infancy period to help improve their lifestyle and consequently the health of their children, and how this information is best delivered. We are also interested in their views and knowledge of local referral options to support development of healthy family lifestyles. The interviews/ focus groups will be approximately 15 and 60 minutes in length, respectively, and will be conducted between September and mid-December 2010.

While we do not expect a significant ongoing time commitment from the GPs and practice nurses as a result of these interviews, we hope that they will support the pilot implementation of the project, by referral of parents and professional contribution to the web portal. As part of the project, GPs and practice nurses in the pilot locations will receive the support materials for provision to relevant patients highlighting the website link. They will also be invited to a briefing concerning the implementation of the pilot project, and an evaluation at the end of project either through a focus group or brief questionnaire. In addition, a senior GP and practice nurse representative will be invited to participate in a project advisory group for each of the pilot locations. This group is expected to meet 2 or 3 times during the project with possible additional telephone or email contact.

If the pilot project is successful, we hope to develop the web portal as a state-wide resource that will provide GPs, practice nurses and other relevant health care providers with a reliable support option for promoting healthy diet and activity during pregnancy and early childhood.

If your Network will consider participating in this project or would like further information please either let me know or alternatively contact:

Anna Fletcher, Edith Cowan University

Tel: 9370 6461

Email: [a.fletcher@ecu.edu.au](mailto:a.fletcher@ecu.edu.au)

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lydia A. Hearn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

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