

# Medical Practice Assisting (MPA) Conference

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**NOAH's on the Beach | NEWCASTLE**

## **PROGRAM**

### **About the Medical Practice Assisting (MPA) Conference:**

This inaugural conference will focus on the role of the Medical Practice Assistant in the contemporary general practice setting. Busy Practice Managers are often looking for innovative and efficient ways of improving their business, often with diminishing resources at their disposal. Medical Practice Assistants are highly valued multi-skilled team members of the Medical Practice, formally trained to provide administrative and clinical assistance to health practitioners.

Delivered by industry experts, the conference will explore the role and scope of practice of Medical Practice Assistants and offer unique insights into this expanding field of primary health care. Conference participants will enjoy opportunities to listen, learn, interact and network with like-minded peers from across Australia, and view the latest trade displays. The conference is presented by the Hunter New England & Central Coast Primary Health Network in conjunction with University of New England Partnerships and the Australian Association of Practice Management (AAPM).



 **NOAH'S  
On the Beach**

## FRIDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MARCH

- 8.15 am      **Arrival & Conference Registration** (Tea & Coffee served)
- 8.45 am      **Acknowledgement of Country** (*Jessica Griffiths, Aboriginal Health Access Officer HNECC PHN*)
- 8.55 am      **Welcome & Introduction** (*Alison Tattersall, CPD & Workforce Team Leader HNECC PHN*)
- 9.00 am      **Opening address** - Overview of the MPA and program; its history with Brisbane North PHN and UNE Partnerships; its educational structure and format; benefits to the Practice, students and team; and the HNECC PHN role in educating and developing the role for their Practices.  
(*Gary Smith, Academic Co-Director of UNE Partnerships' Practice Management portfolio & Cathy Baynie, Academic Co-Director of UNE Partnerships' Practice Management portfolio / former President of Australian Association of Practice Management - AAPM*)
- 9.15 am      **Overview of the role of the Medical Practice Assistant in General Practice**  
What is an MPA? The scope of Practice of an MPA – what they can and can't do? How they are supported in their training by the Practice and UNE Partnerships? And how they are integrated into a Practice. (*Cathy Baynie*)
- 10.00 am      **Cold Chain Management**  
(*Patrick Cashman, Immunisation Coordinator, Hunter New England Local Health District*)
- 10.30 am      **Morning Tea** ☕ .....
- 11.00 am      **Human Resources & Governance** – What Practice Managers need to know & do.  
HR and Governance are intrinsic to all practices. This session will offer information and discussion on training, hiring or employing an MPA. (*George Sotiris, Director, Health Industry Employment Services / AAPM HR Consultant*)
- 12.00 pm      **Recalls & Reminders in Practice Administration** - Medical Practice Assistants can play a key role in enhancing communication and patient relationships to improve continuity of care. This presentation will explore the difference between actions, preventive health reminders and clinically significant recalls using popular medical software.  
(*Katrina Otto, Managing Director, Train IT Medical*)
- 1.00 pm      **Lunch** 🍽️ .....
- 2.00 pm      **Credible communication in the Practice Environment**  
Communication training for the Practice; communicating effectively and appropriately; communication techniques using social media, phone and email, complaint handling techniques and legal and ethical communication in the Practice. (*Gary Smith*)

3.00 pm	<b>Shared Medical Appointments</b> – Shared Medical Appointments (SMAs), also called ‘Group Visits’, are a revolutionary way of managing chronic disease in primary care. They are “a series of consecutive individual medical consultations in a supportive group setting where all can listen, interact, and learn.” ( <i>Tanja McLeish Team Leader, Drug, Alcohol and Indigenous Mental Health, HNECCPHN</i> )
3.45 pm	<b>Afternoon tea</b> ☺ .....
4.00 pm	<b>Panel Discussion / Q&amp;A</b> – The MPA role in general practice ( <i>Gary Smith, Cathy Baynie, Katrina Otto, Rachel Blanch and Sarah Hinton</i> )
5.00 pm	<b>Closing remarks</b> – Summary of today’s discussions. ( <i>Gary Smith</i> )
5.10pm	<b>Close for the day</b>
6.30 pm	<b>Dinner &amp; Graduation Ceremony</b> 🎉 🎓 (Welcome – Alison Tattersall, CPD & Workforce Team Leader, HNECC PHN. Hosted by Margaret Kirby, Manager UNE Partnerships Health Programs, MPA Student Representative will make a formal response. <i>Dinner music from Chilli Jam with Jon &amp; Massiel   Photography - Peter Torning.</i>

## SATURDAY 20<sup>th</sup> MARCH

8.30 am	<b>Tea &amp; Coffee on arrival</b>
8.45 am	<b>Acknowledgement of Country / Recap, introduction and overview of program</b> ( <i>Gary Smith, Practice Management Consultant</i> )
9.00 am	<b>Medical Practice Assistant: Risk or Reward</b> - MPA’s are not externally regulated which means practices need to be even more diligent with governance, scope and integration. ( <i>Angela Mason-Lynch, Practice Management Specialist, Avant Mutual - Angela is a well - known and experienced member of Avant and the Practice Hub, and a previous assessor with UNE Partnerships in MPA</i> )
10.00	<b>Practice data / Pen CAT</b> - Medical Practice Assistants are well positioned to offer a fresh innovative approach to team based care. In this presentation we will focus on data driven improvements relevant to various practice roles. We will also explore standards, initiatives and motivators that help get the team on the same page and drive improvements. ( <i>Katrina Otto</i> )
11.00 am	<b>Morning Tea</b> ☺ .....

- 11.30 am      **History of the MPA program and comparison with international experience**  
(Abbe Anderson, Advisor, Beyond Blue & the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health)
- 12.30 pm      **General practice experience with MPA role**  
Appletree Medical Practice, Charlestown & St. Elmo's Medical Practice, Inverell.
- 1.00 pm      **Lunch** ☺ .....
- 1.45 pm      **Implementing Quality Improvement in general practice**  
This session will explore proven ways to implement quality improvement in general practice to ensure that introduction of the MPA role within a general practice achieves improvements in health care delivery and business efficiency. (Mia Dhillon, CEO, Improvement Foundation)
- 2.45 pm      **Planning for an impact assessment of the MPA role**  
(Andrew Searles, Health Economist, Hunter Medical Research Institute, HMRI)
- 3.15 pm      **Afternoon tea** ☺ .....
- 3.25 pm      **Optimising the role of the Medical Practice Assistant** – How to implement an MPA into the role. The session will be aimed at all Practice Staff focusing on operational management by the Practice Manager, and workflow improvements for the Practice Nurse. It will also explain the strategic benefits of having an MPA in your Practice. (Cathy Baynie)
- 4.15 pm      **Closing remarks & Conference Evaluation** with Slido  
(Gary Smith)
- 4.30 pm      **Conference close**



## CONFERENCE SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



**Alison Tattersall** is the Co-Convenor of the MPA Conference and CPD and Workforce Team Leader at the Hunter New England, Central Coast PHN. As part of her role, Alison has been responsible for the implementation of the scholarship program for MPA's across the PHN. She has also worked for the Hunter Rural Division of General practice and Hunter Medicare Local and spent 27 years as a Practice Manager. Alison holds a Bachelor of Social Science degree and a Masters in Human Resource Management as well as the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. She has previously held the position of Course Coordinator for the WEA Hunter, developing and delivering Certificate 3 and 4 courses in Health Support Services. Alison is a past chair of Maitland Community Care Services and a presently is a board member of ADSSI Ltd.



**Margaret Kirby** is the Co-Convenor of the MPA Conference, and is the Program Manager for Health Programs, UNE Partnerships. Margaret has been working in administration for over 30 years. She has managed the MPA program from concept to implementation with her team at UNE Partnerships. Under her management, the MPA program has established its significance for general practice and has grown to now have a national reach.



**Gary Smith** is known as the 'Guru of Practice Management'. He has more than 30 years of experience as a practice manager, is a former National & NSW President of the AAPM and has extensive experience in the management of health care facilities and in healthcare reform. Gary had a significant influence in the design and delivery of the Certificate IV MPA program and is Co-Director of UNEP Health Programs .



**Cathy Baynie** has career long experience in the Health Industry, in the Public, Private and Aged Care sectors. This includes working in Primary Health Care for the last 20 years. Cathy is a Registered Nurse and Certified Practice Manager, having managed both semi-rural and urban practices. Cathy continues to manage a Multi-Disciplinary General Practice and a Specialist Practice and has held a position with NSW AMA as Practice Management Advisor. Cathy is the Academic Director Health Program with the University of New England Partnerships and consultants with Practices nationally on Governance and Practice Management issues. Cathy is a Director of AAPM and the former National President as well as being a Fellow of the Association.



**Abbe Anderson** has over thirty years of experience in the public, private and not-for-profit health sectors of Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Abbe served for fourteen years as the CEO of the Division of General Practice, Medicare Local and PHN in Brisbane North. She now works in advisory roles with Beyond Blue and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health. Abbe has a PhD from the University of NSW, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, an MBA from Otago University in New Zealand, and a Graduate Diploma of Applied Corporate Governance from the Governance Institute of Australia.



**George Sotiris** is a Workplace Relations Specialist who understands the needs of private practices. Having over 10 years of health industry experience he has worked closely with medical practices, allied health practices and dentists across Australia. George provides practical advice to reduce employment risk and navigate the complex challenges that businesses face with their employees. To accomplish this, George assists his clients in understanding the difficulties of the relevant Modern Awards, Fair Work Legislation, how to implement accurate employment contracts, assist in simplifying policies and procedures and establish a practices framework around Workplace Health & Safety and Privacy.



**Angela Mason-Lynch** has extensive experience managing practices of various disciplines and size. A past State and National AAPM President, Fellow, Life Member & Certified Practice Manager. Angela has experience as an accreditation surveyor and an assessor and trainer for University of New England Partnerships, she is a Registered Nurse with a Post Grad Certificate in Nursing Management.



**Tanja McLeish** is the Team Leader, Drug, Alcohol and Indigenous Mental Health for the HNECCPHN. She has been in the general practice network for more than three decades including roles nationally with the former Australian General Practice Network and within the state-based organisation of General Practice NSW. Tanja was the previous CEO of the Australian Lifestyle Medicine Association and remains as Secretary on the Board of ASLM. Tanja has returned to the Primary Health Network with a passion for lifestyle medicine, prevention and management of chronic disease, research, change management, quality improvement strategies and best practice business systems to improve patient health outcomes as well as clinician wellbeing



**Katrina Otto** has managed several medical practices and accredited day surgery facilities over a 30year career. In her role as Principal & Owner of Train IT Medical she trains the trainers and has been responsible for designing and delivering accredited qualifications ranging from Diploma of Practice Management to Certificate I in Information Technology. She is currently an approved trainer for Medical Director and Best Practice Software.



**Patrick Cashman** RN, BHSc, MPH&TM, GCertAppMgt, has undertaken clinical work in emergency, infectious diseases, remote health & public health. Currently the Immunisation Coordinator at Hunter New England LHD, NSW with interests in vaccine safety, Aboriginal Health, & HCW education. Patrick initiated and also manages the Vaxtracker active surveillance system for Adverse Event Following Immunisation and is part of the AusVaxSafety consortium.



**Mia Dhillon** Mia has over 20 years' experience in the health sector, having been fortunate to work as a practitioner and across a range of health portfolios in Australia and overseas. She has a passion for improving health outcomes and has led high-performing teams to deliver excellent results for state and national programs, including the Australian Primary Care Collaboratives Program. As CEO of Improvement Foundation, she works closely with her team to provide specialist advice on the development and delivery of quality improvement initiatives to bring about systems change.



**Professor Andrew Searles** is the strategic lead for the Health Research Economics group at Hunter Medical Research Institute. This is a highly applied health economics group that works closely with health services across NSW. His work applies economic thinking to health-related issues, and he is experienced in the conduct of the spectrum of economic evaluations including impact assessments. Prof. Searles led the development of a framework to measure research translation and research impact. This framework is also used to assess the impact from health services.

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