

26 August 2007

Labor's GP infrastructure investment welcomed

The Australian General Practice Network today welcomed Kevin Rudd's plan to invest in general practice infrastructure.

AGPN Chair Dr Tony Hobbs said whilst he welcomes today's GP Super Clinic announcement it essential that if elected a Labor Government would work closely with GPs and divisions of general practice to ensure the investments are appropriately targeted to ensure the best patient care.

"Providing infrastructure and incentives for the GP and allied health team including GPs, physiotherapists, psychologists, practice managers and practice nurses to work in the one location would improve patient outcomes.

"Patients that have complex conditions often require care from more than one health professional. For example people with type 2 diabetes quite often have problems with their feet that can require a referral to a podiatrist.

"Today's announcement is one that recognises that multidisciplinary team care will in the long term deliver the best outcomes for the patient. It will also improve access to services and begin to address workforce shortages.

"AGPN have long argued that to improve patient access to quality, sustainable services infrastructure and incentives are critical," Dr Hobbs said.

The plan encourages allied health professionals and members of the GP team to be housed in one location, allowing patients to more easily visit other members of their health teams.

AGPN CEO Kate Carnell said this approach to primary health care takes a very important step in keeping people out of hospital.

"GP Super Clinics allow for a holistic approach to keeping the community healthier. The divisions of general practice network have argued strongly for a focus on a multidisciplinary team care approach.

"We know that a practice nurse explaining better asthma management to the GPs patient or having a diabetes educator in the clinic sees improved patient outcomes and goes along way in keeping people out of hospital.

"Improved management of conditions and focusing on prevention is a very important step.

"Keeping patients well and either in their homes instead of hospitals not only saves the community significant amounts of money but also alleviates the stress on patients and families.

"We welcome the plan as an important step in addressing the health care needs of Australians," Ms Carnell said.

AGPN CEO Kate Carnell is available for TV interviews in Sydney this afternoon. For more information please call Kate Carnell on 0415 662 266 or AGPN's media officer Kathryn Conroy on 0416 428 678