



# News Release

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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## Division GP Panels to support Aged Care

The Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) has welcomed the Strengthening Medicare Aged Care General Practitioner Panels Initiative, saying it provides much needed support for GPs and Divisions of General Practice working in the aged care sector.

The aim of the initiative is to improve access to primary medical care for residents of aged care homes and to enable GPs to work with aged care homes to assist with quality improvement strategies for the care of all residents.

ADGP Chair Dr Rob Walters said, "This initiative is a positive recognition of the work that many Divisions have already been undertaking with aged care homes.

"The benefits of these sorts of regionally coordinated programs are two fold. They result in improved access to primary health care for residents of aged care homes, and strengthen the positive partnerships between the two sectors.

"The introduction of this initiative comes after many years of advocating to government that additional resources were required in the aged care sector. It is a small step in the right direction," said Dr Walters.

"The initiative will supplement, not replace, existing arrangements of GPs providing services to residents of aged care homes," he said. However in some areas, access to GP services for residents was almost non-existent and this initiative will prove particularly helpful in these areas," he said.

"Where successful arrangements are already in place, this initiative should provide an opportunity for aged care homes, GPs and Divisions to work together to enhance and further establish those arrangements."

Another change is the introduction of a new Medicare Item number to enable GPs to undertake a Comprehensive Medical Assessment (CMA) of new and existing residents (if required) of aged care homes.

"The CMA will add a vital step in the care of residents by enabling GPs to conduct a thorough medical assessment of the resident that can then be used by the aged care home to better plan their care," Dr Walters said.

The combined Strengthening Medicare Aged Care Initiatives will receive \$47.9m in funding over three years.

*ADGP is the peak national body representing Australia's 120 Divisions of General Practice. About 95 per cent of GPs belong to a local Division of General Practice.*

**For comment:**

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