



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.



NATIONAL DIVISIONS YOUTH ALLIANCE

GPs working with young people

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GPs Welcome Early Childhood Agenda

Dr Rob Walters, Chair of the Australian Divisions of General Practice, today welcomed the release by the Federal Government of a consultation paper on developing a *National Agenda for Early Childhood*.

“The health of young children is a key priority for ADGP, the Divisions of General Practice Network and their GP members,” Dr Walters said.

“Too often the health and well-being of our children is neglected. The release of this consultation paper is a real opportunity to put our children at the forefront of public policy in this country.

“The paper reflects ADGP’s call for a primary care early childhood agenda in our Budget Submission 2003-04 and I look forward to working with Government to progress this proposal,” Dr Walters said.

Dr Walters congratulated Professor Fiona Stanley, Director of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and 2003 Australian of the Year, who released the paper with Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Larry Anthony, on her outstanding leadership in early childhood policy. Dr Walters also welcomed the Government’s commitment to linking health, education and family policy through the proposed Agenda.

Dr George Cerchez, Chair of the National Divisions Youth Alliance, stressed the importance of general practice in improving the health and well-being of children and families.

“GPs have a key role in giving kids a healthy start to life and to supporting their emotional and social well-being. GPs also provide advice and referral to parents experiencing difficulties with their children,” Dr Cerchez said.

“Mental health is an important child and youth health issue and ADGP strongly supports the need for a greater investment in mental health promotion and prevention in primary care. Support for GPs in the early detection and management of child and adolescent mental health and behaviour problems must also be addressed by the Agenda.

“As GPs are at the frontline of family medicine, they are highly aware of the disease burden represented by mental illness and substance abuse and of the link between these problems in early childhood,” Dr Cerchez said.

“On behalf of the Divisions of General Practice network, I look forward to working in partnership with other key health care organisations to ensure the *National Agenda for Early Childhood* makes a lasting contribution to improving the health of Australian children,” Dr Walters said.

For comment:

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