



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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New MBS items to help GPs manage chronic disease

The Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) welcomes new Medicare Benefits Schedule items for chronic disease management (CDM) announced today by the Health Minister Tony Abbott.

ADGP CEO Kate Carnell said the CDM items would significantly enhance the quality and flexibility of GP-led, multidisciplinary care of patients with chronic medical conditions.

“It is important that our GPs are assisted in managing the needs of people with chronic disease. The CDM items support GPs in proactively developing the best care plans for their patients. They encourage GPs to work in teams with other healthcare professionals where appropriate, as patients with chronic conditions often have complex care needs that require a coordinated, team-based approach.

“Ultimately, the new items are about ensuring that patients with chronic conditions receive the best in customised primary health care.”

Ms Carnell said that the effectiveness of the CDM items would depend to some extent on education initiatives to boost GP awareness and uptake. “It is important that steps are taken to ensure GPs are informed about the CDM items and encouraged to utilise them in their practices.”

The chair of ADGP, Dr Rob Walters, said it was pleasing that the Health Minister had consulted with GPs in developing the new CDM items.

“Seven out of 10 consultations in general practice are chronic-disease related, and management is rarely straightforward. But we know that early intervention and team-based approaches to their management can deliver better health outcomes for the community,” Dr Walters said.

“Once they have become familiar with them, these new items will make it easier for GPs to coordinate the health of patients with chronic disease. GPs out there in communities will have more options regarding care plans, and for a wider range of patients. They will be able delegate some care management duties to other health practitioners, such as practice nurses, and will have greater flexibility in how care plans are reviewed.

“With the right management of chronic disease, serious complications and the need for hospital treatment can be avoided, and many of these patients can live independently for longer.”

The new items come in to effect on July 1, 2005, and replace the existing Enhanced Primary Care items for multidisciplinary care planning services.

For more information or comment please call Jane Castles, ADGP National Communications Coordinator, on 02 6228 0822 or 0412 392 577.

What is ADGP?

ADGP is the peak body representing 119 Divisions of General Practice around Australia. The Divisions Network supports general practice and their practice teams and drives the implementation of innovative health strategies. ADGP is committed to promoting the health of all Australians by supporting the role of Divisions in the nation's primary health care system.