



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

18 October 2005

GPs caring for Carers

"Ordinary Australians in extraordinary circumstances" is the theme for 2005 National Carers Week that runs from October 16-22.

ADGP Chair Dr Rob Walters today paid tribute to the 2.6 million Australians who provide unpaid and often substantial support and care to people who are ill, frail aged or disabled. In acknowledging this work Dr Walters said the carer plays an important role in improving the quality of life of the person receiving care.

Carers Australia took the opportunity to launch "the economic value of informal care" a report prepared by Access Economics for Carers Australia. The report values informal care in Australia in excess of \$31 billion each year.

"Having a carer means that the patient is able to remain in their own home or familiar surroundings for a lot longer than would otherwise be the case, thus easing the burden on residential services", said Dr Walters.

"However, it is often said that carers themselves are the hidden patient. General practitioners play an important role in promoting and maintaining the health and well being of carers who regularly do not present as carers. It is therefore important that GPs improve their identification of people providing care.

"We should take this opportunity during Carers Week to strengthen the relationship between GPs and carers."

Dr Walters said, "Carers are at high risk of physical and emotional health problems. They can suffer from sleep disorders, depression, isolation, work related injuries from lifting and carrying, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and often feel burdened by their responsibilities. The primary health care team can provide support, information and resources to address these issues."

Ordinary Australians are playing an extraordinary role in caring for some of the most vulnerable members of our community and often at a personal cost to themselves. GPs and allied health professionals need to work collaboratively to ensure these people have access to the services they need.

**For more information please call
Rob Walters, ADGP Chairman on 0418 127 123 or
Kate Carnell, ADGP Chief Executive Officer, on 0415 662 266.**

WHAT IS ADGP?

- ADGP is the peak body representing 119 Divisions of General Practice and eight State-based organisations (SBOs) around Australia. The Divisions Network supports general practice and their practice teams and drives the implementation of innovative health strategies.
- ADGP, through the Divisions Network, works to integrate general practice with other sectors of the health system, both government and non-government, to deliver high quality care to the Australian community.
- ADGP is committed to promoting the health of all Australians by supporting the role of Divisions in the nation's primary health care system.



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