



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

4 February 2006

World Cancer Day

World Cancer Day on 4 February is a reminder to think about the 15,500 cancer deaths each year that could be prevented. These deaths are due to a range of lifestyle behaviours such as smoking, inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption, physical inactivity, harmful sun exposure and being overweight or obese due to smoking, sun exposure, poor diet, alcohol, inadequate exercise or being overweight.

A wellness oriented, primary health care system with general practice in a pivotal role is a necessary pre-requisite to an effective health system and to preventing a range of chronic diseases including cancer. The Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) are working towards a wellness oriented system. In a new Primary Health Care Position Statement launched in November 2005, the Network calls for change to our systems including support for multidisciplinary teams with GPs as essential members, incorporating health promotion and illness prevention and delivering effective information technology and information management solutions.

GPs are giving patients' personalised advice in the form of a lifestyle prescription and provide support to patients on quitting smoking, eating healthier food, drinking alcohol safely, exercising more and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. The Lifescripts initiative delivers the tools to assist GPs in providing evidence based healthy lifestyle advice.

The Lifescripts tools and resources were delivered to general practice in 2005, ADGP calls on the Government to continue to support this important initiative in the 2006-07 Federal Budget. Continued support for Lifescripts will embed the early gains made since Lifescripts was launched in September 2005 and would provide the support, time and capacity for general practices to implement Lifescripts more systematically.

"Engaging in healthier lifestyles will help to prevent some of the more common cancers, save in treatment costs for the health system over the long term and help people to live healthier, happier lives. Prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles is a key component in reorienting our health care system towards wellness" said Ms Carnell, CEO of ADGP.

"The Divisions Network are change agents, and our health system needs changing" said Dr Jenny Thomson, ADGP Chair. "We support reorienting our health system towards wellness by introducing a Medicare item to provide a preventative health check up for all Australians, including obesity as a condition eligible to access the comprehensive treatment available under chronic disease management items and supporting multidisciplinary teams with GPs as essential members to become the main access point for population health initiatives, community development activities and clinical encounters."

ADGP urges the federal, state and territory governments to implement a coordinated care program in the primary health care setting for the ongoing treatment of cancer patients allowing them to continue to be active in the community longer and out of hospitals.

For more information please call Kate Carnell, ADGP CEO, 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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