



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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Getting graphic on smoking

The Australian Divisions of General Practice welcomes the new graphic health warnings to be portrayed on cigarette packages and launched today by Christopher Pyne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing.

Smoking causes more deaths and disease in Australia than any other preventable risk factor, and is responsible for an estimated 19,000 deaths and 142,500 hospital admissions per year. Life-long smokers have a 50–60% chance of dying from a tobacco-related disease, and half of these deaths will occur between the ages of 25 and 54 years.

The introduction of regulations for tobacco packaging to include these graphic warnings demonstrates that Australia continues to be an international leader in tobacco control and cessation.

Kate Carnell, ADGP, CEO said "It is encouraging that COAG have given priority to prevention and early intervention, health workforce and the link between health and broader social and economic outcomes for the community. These links are particularly well demonstrated in the area of tobacco prevention."

Lifestyle behaviours make up the largest group of preventable risk factors for death and disease in Australia and are common in patients seen by general practice. The presence of multiple risk factors will substantively increase the patient's risk of developing chronic illnesses and reduce overall well-being and functional capacity through life.

"ADGP welcomes the new *Well Person's Health Check* announced recently by the Council of Australian Governments, but cautions this does not go far enough. We need a health check for all Australians that does not depend on your age or any other criteria" said Ms Carnell.

"These new health warnings are likely to increase the number of patients asking general practitioners for smoking cessation advice and support. Through Lifescripts, a healthy lifestyle initiative, general practice has the tools to assess patients and provide a lifestyle prescription to help them quit smoking" said Dr Jenny Thomson, Chair ADGP.

ADGP calls on the Government to continue to support the implementation of Lifescripts 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, linked in with other key initiatives such as the *Well Persons Health Check*.

For more information please call 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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