



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

11 May 2006

ADGP welcomes the Government's commitment to addressing obesity and other lifestyle risk factors through additional funding for Lifescripts

ADGP welcomes the increased funding of \$2.7million over four years the government has committed to the Lifescripts initiative which provides tools for general practice to address obesity and other lifestyle risk factors for chronic disease with patients. Lifescripts is being implemented through the Divisions of General Practice network and is supported by a number of other commitments in the Australian Better Health Initiative.

Obesity has reached epidemic proportions in Australia. Recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate an alarming 62% of men and 45% of women are overweight or obese. Perhaps even more alarming than this is the finding that only 32% of men and 37% of women assessed themselves as being overweight. So a significant proportion of people who have weight problems that are likely to impact on their health and well being aren't aware of the problem. These figures demonstrate that we need to take some practical steps that assist people to make and maintain behavioural changes.

"Obesity is a complex condition that requires a multidisciplinary approach to patient care. I urge the government to list obesity as a chronic condition so it can be managed under the Enhanced Primary Care Chronic Disease Management Medicare Items. This will allow GPs to refer patients to a dietician and an exercise physiologist as part of a team care arrangement" said Dr Jenny Thomson ADGP Chair.

"The evidence is irrefutable: not only do primary care-led systems achieve better outcomes and contain cost, we also know that brief interventions by GPs on quitting smoking, eating healthier food, drinking alcohol safely, exercising more and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight work."

Ms Carnell said "Following on from the COAG Australian Better Health Initiative announced in February this budget shows the Government is ready to make some real investments in primary health care and, have acknowledged that prevention is better than cure."

"Preventing and managing chronic disease through our primary health care system is important to community wellness, social and economic participation and national productivity and is the key to keeping the lid on health system costs."

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.



Telephone 02 6228 0800

Facsimile 02 6228 0899

Email adgpreception@adgp.com.au