



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

19 July 2006

Cut the draconian intervention, interference and intrusion

The Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) supported calls made by Australian Medical Association (AMA) President, Mukesh Haikerwal during his address to the National Press Club in Canberra today, calling for the removal of the red tape that is strangling GPs.

In a study commissioned by the AMA, Access Economics found that GPs spent 1840 hours each year on the phone to call centres having their prescription decisions approved.

ADGP Chair Dr Jenny Thomson said GPs are under constant government scrutiny when prescribing medicines for their patients with parameters being set by public servants.

“It does not have to be this way and government red tape is not helping encourage medical graduates to choose general practice as their speciality. There is no need for draconian intervention, interference or intrusion in the GP patient relationship.

“GPs are currently required to phone a government call centre for certain prescription authorisation. This is simply unacceptable and ADGP has a solution,” Dr Thomson said.

ADGP and eight divisions have worked in conjunction with GP groups from New Zealand to develop a workable solution to remove red tape, address growing PBS costs, and improve GP job satisfaction and appeal.

Known as ERM (Effective Resource Management) the system will see GPs gather in professional groups to consider and analyse the latest drug information and prescribing data. GPs will be able to have direct access to critical data that is not currently available to them.

Pilot participant Dr Geoff Chapman from Hobart, is confident ERM is a viable and worthwhile project.

“GPs will continue to work with their own patients on a fee for service basis. With additional information, they will be able to understand even more clearly the most effective (and the most cost-effective) prescribing methods to suit their patients” Dr Chapman said.

Dr Thomson explained there will be no allocation of targets or budgets to GPs – they will continue to prescribe in the best interests of their patients. However, prescribing decisions will be better informed and allow for the removal of red tape.

Page 1 of 2

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 adgp@adgp.com.au

“The current system isn’t smart or sustainable and simply must change. That is why the ERM project has been researched extensively. The research included looking at overseas experience and thoroughly analysing PBS data.

“The solution we are proposing will see improved quality use of medicine as GPs discuss and review their individual methods with their peers. Decisions about their own practice will be their own made against professional and best practice standards,” Dr Thomson said.

By cutting this red tape the analysis carried out by the ERM consortium demonstrates that the savings to the PBS will be in the order of \$170 million a year.

The proposal has these saving re-invested in health. They can be applied where they are needed most and directed into targeted local programs benefiting the community, not fiscally rewarding GPs.

This solution involves change, a big change - it’s time to adopt some workable solutions for the benefit of the Australian health system in this century and well beyond.

The ERM proposal is currently before the Department of Health and Ageing.

For more information please call Kate Carnell, ADGP Chief Executive Officer, on 0415 662 266.

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

ACN 082 812 146

PO Box 1126 Belconnen ACT 2617

Telephone: 02-6251 3380 ♦ Facsimile: 02-6251 3390 ♦ Email: adgpreception@adgp.com.au