



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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GPs well prepared to support patients tackle obesity

GPs are well prepared to deliver the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines for treating obesity, following calls for GP support made by Senator Guy Barnett on Wednesday.

ADGP Chair Dr Jenny Thomson said through the divisions network, Australian GPs are well equipped and are already tackling Australia's largest growing epidemic.

"ADGP has devised and implemented a number of programs that help support GPs deal with the diagnosis and treatment of obesity," Dr Thomson said.

GPs understand obesity and the medical complications that can arise. The coordinated approach to treatment such as referring patients in need to dieticians and exercise specialists is crucial in patient successful weight loss management programs.

ADGP have also helped develop an exciting initiative that helps patients manage and recognise their weight problems. The program known as *Lifescrpts* allows GPs to use a notepad similar to a standard medication prescription to write a "script" for the patient's treatment, for example walking three times a week for half an hour and some dietary advice.

"*Lifescrpts* encourage patients to take responsibility for their weight loss program with sound medical advice. In some circumstances where other risk factors also occur, GPs can refer patients to government subsidized appointments with other health professionals such as dieticians and exercise physiologists.

"Every obese patient has different requirements to help them loose weight and maintain a healthy lifestyle. *Lifescrpts* encourages doctors to talk about realistic solutions for their patients," Dr Thomson said.

The Federal Government's commitment to address the obesity challenge is a step in the right direction.

ADGP CEO Kate Carnell said through the Federal Government's strategies, GPs are perfectly placed to help and support obese patients.

"It is smart workable solutions such as raising community awareness and developing supported management programs for patients that are fundamental to overcoming obesity in Australia.

"Popular yet unworkable ideas such as banning junk food ads simply will not work. As Health Minister Tony Abbott has pointed out moderation is the key, unlike tobacco abuse where every cigarette causes damage.

"GPs have the tools, resources and skills to help the nation's growing weight problem," Ms Carnell said.

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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