

19 December 2006

Quit smoking prescription for pregnant women

The Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) today welcomed the Federal Government's launch of the *Smoking in Pregnancy Lifescript* designed to help pregnant women kick the nicotine habit.

AGPN Chair Dr Tony Hobbs said smoking whilst pregnant poses many risks to unborn babies and mothers. This new GP resource, developed by an AGPN-lead consortium will assist pregnant women stop smoking.

"Research indicates that women who smoke during pregnancy are more likely to have babies with a low birth weight as well as other complications. Babies with low birth weights are more vulnerable to infections and more likely to have breathing difficulties.

"This *Lifescript* for smoking during pregnancy supports GPs and practice nurses in explaining the health impacts for mother and baby, along with the enormous benefits of quitting," Dr Hobbs said.

This program is delivered in a clinical setting such as a general practice, where women are given additional support to help stop smoking. *Pregnancy Lifescripts* provide support for the GP or practice nurse to:

- discuss smoking with patients
- set realistic quitting goals
- provide written lifestyle prescriptions
- organising ongoing review
- refer patients to other services that support healthy lifestyle choices, such as the Quit line

AGPN CEO Kate Carnell said using the general practice setting to help patients quit smoking doubles the chances of successful cessation.

"AGPN are extremely proud of this resource. This is just another way that the Australian General Practice Network is delivering local health solutions through general practice.

"We have worked very hard with our consortium members (Australian College of Midwives, Davidson Consulting, Parent-Infant Research Institute, General Practice Divisions- Victoria, Queensland Divisions of General Practice, South Australian Divisions of General Practice Inc) to get this program up and running.

"We are confident it will play a big role in the future health of Australia's new born babies," Ms Carnell said.

For more information or interviews please phone AGPN CEO Kate Carnell on 0415 662 266