



# **NEWS RELEASE**

**Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.**

03/46

10/10/2003

## **GENERAL PRACTICE WELCOMES WORKING WITH SCHOOLS ON NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE**

The general practice community welcomes the child and adolescent theme for World Mental Health Day 2003.

“Mental health problems in young people are common. They account for over half the disease burden affecting young people and it is estimated that 14% of children and young people may have mental health problems.” said Dr Chris McAuliffe, GP adviser to ADGP on mental health.

“Young people themselves rank depression among their top three issues of concern.”

“The secondary school years can be a time of great vulnerability, particularly the transition into high school, and into Years 11 and 12. It is an important time to ensure schools, families and health professionals work together to protect and promote the mental health of all children and young people.”

“Only 1 in 4 young people with mental health problems receive help and when they do, GPs are the health professional of choice.” Dr McAuliffe said

“It is timely that MindMatters Plus GP is now an active Initiative. The Australian Divisions of General Practice has been funded under the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing’s MindMatters Plus Initiative. Through a range of innovative approaches, the initiative will develop stronger links between general practice and secondary schools to help students with high mental health support needs.”

Dr McAuliffe said “The MindMatters Plus GP Initiative recognises that general practice can provide care that is non-stigmatising, preventative and links young people with other support services in the community.”

Divisions of General Practice will play a key role in connecting with schools locally to implement the Initiative to provide effective referral pathways and networks of care.

Dr Di Symonds said “The initiative came at the right time for us in the Northern Territory. I along with the MindMatters Plus school and local service providers had been looking for ways to better connect to help young people with mental health needs. MindMatters Plus GP has provided us with the mechanism to take action to help those in need now and develop effective referral pathways for the future.”

“This is an exciting initiative that is leading the way. It is providing a national framework to bring general practice, education and community services together to provide co-ordinated assistance to secondary school students with high mental health needs.” said Dr McAuliffe.

At a National workshop in September, MindMatters Plus schools said that the MindMatters Plus GP initiative provides an excellent opportunity for them to engage with their local Division of General Practice. Schools are keen to work with Divisions, which can act as a conduit between schools and GPs to build better networks of care for students.

MindMatters Plus is a mental health promotion and early intervention initiative that is currently being demonstrated in 17 schools across Australia.

MindMatters Plus GP is a collaboration between ADGP’s Mental Health Program and the National Divisions Youth Alliance.

For further information on the MindMatters Plus GP Initiative go to <http://ndya.adgp.com.au>.

*For comment*

*For further information*

*Dr Chris McAuliffe, GP Adviser, Mental Health, ADGP 0412 439 120*

*Jennifer Doggett, Communications Manager 02 6228 0822 or 0403 325 980*