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Methamphetamines paper welcomed

Wednesday's release of the Australian National Council on Drugs position paper on methamphetamines has been welcomed by Australia's peak body representing general practice, the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN).

AGPN supports the report's three main points of action, requiring a joint response from health and other sectors including GPs, emergency services, customs and counsellors.

AGPN Chair Dr Tony Hobbs said a big picture response to growing methamphetamine usage in the community is critical to combating this problem.

"The three key objectives:

- having sustained action targeting prevention of harm from methamphetamine use
- reducing the availability of high purity methamphetamine
- improving the capacity of frontline workers to respond to and work with those who are at risk of dependence or experiencing problems with use

are viable solutions to this problem.

"From a GPs perspective, having a good understanding of how these drugs affect patients is critical for the development of well coordinated care. GPs are ideally placed to identify patients who may be at risk of problematic drug use," Dr Hobbs said.

AGPN recently launched the 'Can Do' Initiative: Managing Mental Health and Substance Use in General Practice, a training program for GPs and allied health professionals.

This project has been funded by the Departments of Health and Ageing and Veterans' Affairs and provides multidisciplinary training and clinical education, for GPs and a wide range of allied health professionals.

AGPN CEO Kate Carnell said we know that rates of substance use are higher among those with mental health problems.

"This initiative will allow GPs and their peers to access education and training that will add to their knowledge, skills and networks to identify, treat and support patients with mental health and substance use problems.

"AGPN is proud to deliver another health solution to Australian communities through general practice," Ms Carnell said.

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