



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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Labor proposal has potential, say GPs

Dr Rob Walters, Chair of the Australian Divisions of General Practice, said today that Labor's Medicare proposal had potential to deliver increased services to communities, provided the local knowledge and expertise of Divisions of General Practice is used to identify "Health Hotspots" and manage Medicare Teams.

"Labor's proposal picks up on many of the issues identified by ADGP and the other GP groups as contributing to the current crisis in general practice," Dr Walters said.

"Supporting GPs with practice nurses and allied health workers in a general practice team has the potential to take the pressure off GPs and increase community access to primary health care services.

"Providing GPs with flexible employment options will attract GPs currently not practising back into the GP workforce. It may also encourage GPs planning early retirement to reconsider their decision, if the practice contracts cover their medical indemnity insurance.

"However, as both Labor and the Government have recognized, we also need substantial long term increases in GP numbers to meet the community's demand for primary health care into the future," Dr Walters said.

Dr Walters stressed the need for local Divisions of General Practice to be involved in identifying Health Hotspots and working with GPs, consumers and local health services to ensure the Medicare Teams are supported to provide the high quality health services required by the community.

"Divisions are experienced in finding innovative solutions to community health problems and are the only infrastructure that can deliver locally planned and integrated primary care services.

"In many cases Divisions would be ideally placed to manage the Medicare Teams as they have already developed relationships with hospitals in their local areas and have extensive knowledge of the health needs of the community.

"The involvement of Divisions would ensure that the necessary information technology systems are in place to transfer patient data securely between health services and that other important issues, such as the provision of after hours care, are appropriately addressed.

"The fact is that many Divisions already own and manage general practices, particularly in rural and outer urban areas where there are workforce shortages and communities have been unable to attract doctors. Dr Walters said.

For comment:

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