



12 June 2013

CONFUSION THREATENS PATIENT ACCESS TO AFTER HOURS CARE

Meeting in Canberra today, United General Practice Australia (UGPA) has expressed serious concerns about threats to the availability of general practice after hours services around the country.

UGPA leaders unanimously agreed that, without urgent action, patient access to quality GP after hours services would be compromised.

The provision of after hours services is currently hampered by increasing red tape and confusion around the new arrangements. Furthermore, this may also be a disincentive for practices to remain accredited as providers of high quality care.

UGPA welcomes recent changes to Medicare Locals after hours service contracts announced yesterday by the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA), and calls on Medicare Locals to advise local GPs of the changes to quickly put an end to any confusion around how after hours services will be managed.

To provide certainty for patients, PIP after hours funding needs to continue for another six months during the transition to new contracts.

There is a growing need to provide and improve community access to after hours care. UGPA says this requires more investment, not less.

UGPA comprises the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), the Australian Medical Association (AMA), the Australian Medicare Local Alliance (AMLA), the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN), General Practice Registrars Australia (GPRA), the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA).

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