



19 March 2013

## **UGPA LEADERS INSIST ON IMMEDIATE TRAINING REFORMS TO INCREASE AUSTRALIA'S GP WORKFORCE**

Australia's general practice (GP) leaders have warned that accessible and affordable healthcare in Australia is under threat unless more junior doctors are encouraged to enter general practice.

At a recent United General Practice Australia (UGPA) meeting in Canberra, GP leaders agreed that there is an urgent need to significantly increase GP training numbers to capture the surge of junior doctors coming through the hospital system.

Medical Undergraduate training places were originally increased to redress the rural and outer metropolitan community's access to general practice services; however the UGPA believes decisive action by the Government is needed to increase GP training numbers to ensure that Australia attains a balance between the general practice and specialist workforces.

The most recent Medical Workforce 2011 report released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) showed a decline in the supply of GPs despite recent increases to GP vocational training, whereas other specialty areas demonstrated overall growth. Further, the report confirms the maldistribution of the Australian general practice workforce with an ongoing shortage of GPs in outer metropolitan, rural and remote Australia.

UGPA is calling on government to further increase GP training numbers to 1,700 per annum, to ensure that the community has continued access to high quality and affordable GP services. This must be backed by significant increases to supervisor and training capacity, combined with attractive training models to encourage trainees to undertake general practitioner training.

Quality patient care delivered via general practitioners, in collaboration with other medical specialists, is the most efficient and cost effective way to successfully manage the healthcare of an ageing population and increasing numbers of patients with complex multi-system conditions.

UGPA acknowledged initiatives including the Prevocational General Practice Placements Programs (PGPPP) had gone a long way to enhance junior doctors' understanding of primary healthcare, and voiced its support to see this program further expanded to ensure that the majority of prevocational doctors can experience general practice before making their final specialty choice.

Members of UGPA agreed that increasing the number of general practice training places is a positive initiative, provided clinical supervision capacity issues and appropriate infrastructure to facilitate high quality training were adequately addressed.

**ENDS**

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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