



GPs to receive comprehensive Influenza pandemic training 11 June 2009

Australian general practice will get urgent pandemic preparedness training under a joint program to be run by the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) and The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), and funded by the Federal Government.

The general practice network and the college have joined forces to ensure general practice staff can use personal protection equipment (PPE) and are prepared for an outbreak. The training aims to build on existing general practice knowledge and skills in managing infection control during a potential pandemic.

"AGPN has been approached by General Practitioners (GPs) who are asking us for assistance in identifying best practice to manage Influenza H1N1 cases. They have also raised concerns about access to personal protective equipment and appropriate regional protocols for pandemic management," said AGPN chair, Dr Emil Djakic.

"General practice has an essential role containing the spread of this disease and all the members of the general practice team play a key role in supporting GPs to provide the care that patients require during a pandemic. While GPs have the training to manage this current outbreak this program will increase the skills of GPs and our practice teams for this important work," said Dr Chris Mitchell, RACGP President.

While many general practices have gone through pandemic planning already, this training will be a welcome refresher for practice teams. The training will also provide additional education on patient management guidelines and will be tailored to meet local needs, Dr Mitchell said.

Dr Djakic said one of the issues facing doctors was that the usual patient case load for general practice still needs to be cared for.

"This could escalate the impact of the pandemic on general practice, because patients who are sick with illnesses other than the flu still need care – and not to be exposed to the virus," he said.

Local general practice networks are also preparing for PPE and drug stocks to be rolled out to general practices when State and Commonwealth bodies release their stockpiles. This is already happening in Victoria.

Media interviews: AGPN Communications Director Frith Rayner: 0402 267 190 or RACGP National Manager Media and Communications Jason Berek-Lewis on 0404 055 265