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## Support for Access Card Legislation

The legislation surrounding the new Access Card being introduced into Federal Parliament this week has been supported by the Australian General Practice Network.

AGPN were one of the 120 organisations that submitted a proposal to the Government on the type of information the card should hold.

Having closely monitored the development of the legislation, AGPN is satisfied that their privacy concerns have been addressed, particularly in relation to the card being used as formal identification.

AGPN Chair Dr Tony Hobbs said the Access Card has two elements, one for compulsory information and one for voluntary information.

"AGPN is very keen to work with the Federal Government, consumer groups and other stakeholders to develop the voluntary information component of the card.

"We are urging the Government to consider the types of valuable health information the card could potentially hold," Dr Hobbs said.

The Access Card has the capability to allow patients to voluntarily add medical information to their card. Information could potentially range from allergies to chronic conditions such as heart disease and long term medications.

"Having these types of details available to medical professionals and emergency services staff will improve the way the patient is treated and potentially save lives," Dr Hobbs said.

AGPN CEO Kate Carnell said we are urging the government to work with AGPN to effectively cut red and ensure patient verification isn't an imposition on general practice.

"The streamlining component of the AGPN submission suggested the card should be able to instantly update record systems in general practice, essentially matching existing Medicare information to that of the GPs, eliminating the current double entry processes.

"But verification of patient eligibility for Medicare benefits in general practice must not be an onerous task for GPs," Ms Carnell said.

AGPN strongly believes in the potential of the Access Card to improve health outcomes and look forwarding to formally working with the government and other interested parties to constructing the appropriate parameters surrounding the voluntary information side of the card.

**For more information please call AGPN CEO Kate Carnell on 0415 662 266**