



**25 June 2010**

## **Australia takes first step towards an integrated health system**

With the passing of the Healthcare Identifier Bill last night, Australia has taken the first important step in creating a more connected, patient centric health system, says Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) chair Dr Emil Djakic.

"Unique identifiers for individuals and health care providers are an essential building block of an integrated eHealth system that improves health outcomes for patients.

"The passing of the Healthcare Identifier Bill will allow us to implement a system that saves lives and protects individual patients from information related adverse outcomes in the health system," Dr. Djakic said.

Dr Djakic, a Tasmanian GP and national clinical adviser to the National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA), said that the unique identifiers enables enhanced healthcare systems that will further benefit patients.

"While valuable in their own right, we will really see the benefit of these unique identifiers through the clever, patient centric systems they allow us to have.

"With the ability to uniquely identify a patient across the system and accurately match clinical records, safe and efficient referrals, discharge and medication management means a patient's important health information truly travels with them wherever they go.

"It's all about having the right information, in the right place, at the right time about the right patient" Dr. Djakic said.

Dr Djakic was quick to point out that making this integrated health system a reality will require considerable investment and support.

"To achieve a truly connected eHealth system, implementation needs to be supported and standardised across the entire health system.

"Critical to success is a considerable and coordinated 'change and adoption' program implemented across general practice and the broader primary care sector to assist practitioners in adopting these eHealth solutions.

"The Network, with its national reach and established relationships with general practice, is uniquely placed to deliver this 'change and adoption' program and support practitioners in using this technology to improve outcomes for their patients," Dr. Djakic said.

**For media interviews please phone David Butt, CEO on 0411 474 912**