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## **AMA WA waste is 'shadow boxing' on Medicare Locals**

The AMA in Western Australia is wasting members' money in its shadow boxing of an improved system to support GPs and better patient care, the Chair of the Australian General Practice Network [AGPN] Dr Emil Djakic said today.

"A report in today's West Australian newspaper that the doctor's union is using \$100,000 of its members' money to campaign against the introduction of Medicare Locals appears to be part of a campaign that's too farcical and misguided to be taken seriously," Dr Djakic said.

"If they have \$100,000 to spend, then why not spend it on supporting GPs and consumers to get a better health system, rather than trying to deny the West Australian community access to better integrated health services?" he said.

"Discussions and consultations about primary health care organisations - Medicare Locals - have been ongoing for four years now, and the AMA has been involved in those consultations.

"Within days of Western Australia being given its first two Medicare Locals, which is something that should be celebrated, the AMA suddenly cries foul which is indicative of how farcical is this campaign.

"Medicare Locals are designed to help GPs and other health professionals including specialists through to allied health professionals to better coordinate and deliver greater integrated care for patients with GPs at the centre of that care.

"AMA WA's GP members are being delivered a system of care that puts them in the driver's seat for primary health care reform.

"Does the WA AMA seriously think the current health system is perfect, that GPs can't be more central to primary patient care, and that all that needs to happen is to deliver more of the same?"

"Population health planning, data and statistics on population health, enhanced mental health services, better access to after hours services and changes to personally controlled electronic health records are all on the cards for WA's Medicare Locals.

"The AMA's members are set to benefit from the services and opportunities Medicare Locals will be able to offer them and in turn create a primary health care system that will increasingly focus on patient care in the primary sector as opposed to patient care in the hospital sector.

"This waste of AMA members' money is indicative of a union that has had its head buried in the sand for too long," Dr Djakic said.

**For media interviews phone Karen Warner on 02 6228 0819 or 0438 179 520**