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## **Preventative Health Taskforce Report recommendations on track for better health**

Preventive health is the key business of General Practitioners, but they need to be properly funded to deliver it, says Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) Chair Dr Emil Djakic.

Dr Djakic, a Tasmanian GP, welcomed the National Preventative Health Strategy's suggested funding model of blended payments, including capitation and fee-for-service, which evidence shows results in better health outcomes.

"Fee-for-service is a great model of episodic care, but it fails our chronically ill patients, and the tsunami of chronically ill patients is about to hit general practice. The taskforce recommendation to explore a number of funding options, which have been opposed by doctors groups in the past, is the best way forward," he said.

He said the taskforce's report reflected much of AGPN's submission – including options for patient enrollment and the important place of eHealth in our future system.

Dr Djakic argued the recommendations to increase taxes on smoking and alcohol would save lives and would reduce the chronic disease burden.

"The Preventative Health Taskforce report gets a big tick from us. We have campaigned for a long time to see added taxes on cigarettes and for investment in preventive measures which are clearly linked to disease," he said.

Dr Djakic urged the Government to give serious consideration to the recommendations.

"The evidence is there that increasing costs lowers smoking rates, and even simple approaches like a GP asking a patient if they smoke is enough to encourage them to quit – we have known this for some time, now we need to act on it," he said.

Preventive measures like increasing costs of harmful products and lowering cost of healthy products made sense, he said.

"Diet, binge drinking, smoking and lack of physical exercise are all strongly connected to developing Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and other conditions like cancer. Type 2 diabetes is often preventable, with just a small amount of help people can turn their illness around," he said.

He said improved health outcomes in the community were the main focus of the recommendations and they should be endorsed.

"Our Network provides lifestyle modification programs for at-risk patients referred by GPs. They also run education programs for children on healthy eating and physical exercise. With the Taskforce's recommendations running alongside those programs we could see huge benefits to the population," he said.

**For media interviews please phone AGPN Communications Manager Frith Rayner on 02 6228 0819 or 0402 267 190**