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Investment in primary health care welcome - AGPN

A solid investment in primary health care workforce is an essential foundation for the successful roll out of the Government's health reform agenda, said Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) Chair Dr Emil Djakic.

Dr Djakic's comments come after the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, announced a significant increase in General Practitioner (GP) training placements from 812 to 1200 by 2014.

The Prime Minister's move will make a much needed contribution to building the sustainability and viability of general practice and is a critical element of true health reform, Dr Djakic said.

"Without general practice true health reform will stumble out of the starting blocks, rather than making an impact. We need the workforce to make sure general practice can provide the high standard of care Australians deserve," he said.

Dr Djakic said further investment in general practice infrastructure would move the health reform agenda forward.

"A built up workforce and investment in general practice infrastructure to house this new wave of GPs and multidisciplinary teams are the keys to a primary health care sector which will best serve the health care needs of the community," said Dr Djakic.

The extra GP placements will help ease the burden being felt by general practice nationwide.

"For a long time now GPs have been overworked and the numbers of junior doctors choosing to specialise rather than go into general practice has been steadily increasing, taking away from our workforce.

"As the baby boomers begin to retire and without change, general practice will see a decline in its workforce and not enough junior doctors to replace them, the announcement will help fix this problem," said Dr Djakic.

He also said that yesterday's announcement highlights the Government's recognition that building the capacity and viability of general practice is important to achieving the objectives of health care reform.

"We have heard the Government's blueprint for hospital reform. We would urge the Government to bring forward its announcements about primary health care.

"At the end of the day what we need is an organised effective workforce, an increased training capacity throughout general practice, which includes GPs and we need extra infrastructure injected into general practice so that we can train the workforce of the future to deliver quality connected care," said Dr Djakic.

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