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## **PM announcements mean more money for diabetes care**

Funding for patients with diabetes will increase by 60 percent on average and enable significantly better treatment under the diabetes package announced by the Prime Minister yesterday.

Dr Emil Djakic, Chair, Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) said the \$1200 a diabetes patient will increase funding for each patient by \$440.00 and can be directed to better care.

"AGPN has pushed for the introduction of flexible funding models for many years. These extra funds will enable GPs to pick the right care for the patient.

"For example, not all diabetes patients need high level care, many just require regular check ups. The perverse incentive of Medicare means I have to see diabetes patients four times a year if they need to see me or not – under Mr Rudd's plan our Practice Nurse could look after my healthier diabetes patients, freeing me up to see those who do need GP care," he said.

Dr Djakic said while details of the plan need to be worked through with the profession the announcement was a step in the right direction for chronic illness care.

"The extra \$440.00 per patient might mean we can engage a professional to care for patients' foot care needs or offer dietary advice, perhaps have someone to help patients understand the system and access the right services and allow our Practice Nurses to use their full skill set.

"Chronic illnesses like diabetes and heart disease take up about 70 percent of general practice work, these are the patients we see every day. The Prime Minister's policy will mean patients see the right provider, at the right time and at the right cost," he said.

Estimates based on current use of general practice and allied health services show an increase in funding under the new model of \$440.00 in additional services can be bought with the government's announcement.

"Medicare statistics show that the average patient with diabetes consumes about \$485 of general practice services and about \$175 of allied health services each year, so this new package provides an average increase of almost 60 percent for additional services.

"AGPN's 2009 Position Statement called for voluntary enrolment of patients, blended funding models and team working – all of which the government has included in their new approach to diabetes care.

"Research tells us these elements will keep our diabetes patients healthy and living longer, better quality lives," he said.

Dr Djakic said the incentives would provide patients with more opportunity for broader treatments and access to health care which could only lead to a healthier Australian population.

To view AGPN's 2009 Position Statement go to: [www.agpn.com.au/media/publications/agpn-position-statements](http://www.agpn.com.au/media/publications/agpn-position-statements)

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