



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

26 April 2006

Smartcards for smarter health outcomes

This year 84% of Australians will walk into a general practice, register their personal details at the front desk and verify that they can claim a subsidy from Medicare Australia. Technology has progressed to such an advanced state that the Medicare Card currently in use has become outdated, insecure and is no longer achieving the expectations of government, doctors or their patients.

Kate Carnell, CEO Australian Divisions of General Practice said today "Australian Governments are facing the reality that paper based transactions are compromising the safety and quality of service that Australians demand from their publicly supported health services.

"Smartcards will help make electronic payments to patients more efficient and improve the sharing of health information that can significantly improve patient safety. In any guise this must contribute to improvements in quality of care.

"The implementation of a Smartcard is strongly supported by the ADGP. It must be done without added complexity to the users and be integrated into general practice business in a way that doesn't increase GP costs - both pecuniary or in time.

"Access to information about a patient's allergies, immunisation status, recent tests, current medicine and chronic conditions on a Smartcard will provide doctors with an important KEY to health decisions.

"The Smartcard must be more than a keycard for EFTPOS transactions, it must contain, in a secure manner, meaningful and relevant data - then it will become a component that contributes to GP and patient discussion and hence better health information for better care, Kate Carnell added.

"ADGP believes that reform of Medicare billing and the implementation of Smartcards is the major catalyst to wider usage and uptake of electronic health systems in general practice. With an increasing emphasis on the use of multidisciplinary team care arrangements in health care, the need for multiple providers to access accurate and timely health information about their patients is vital.

"Of interest to the ADGP is the fact that bank account details could be stored voluntary on the chip allowing direct reimbursement to the patient from Medicare or other government services. This would reduce error and free up Medicare queues. Aged care and child care benefits and welfare services are all added functions that can be debated. However, from a patient/GP perspective, it's all about information that contributes to acute, well informed clinical decisions," Kate Carnell said.

For more information please call Kate Carnell, ADGP Chief Executive Officer, on 0415 662 266.

WHAT IS ADGP?

- ADGP is the peak body representing 119 Divisions of General Practice and eight State-based organisations (SBOs) around Australia. The Divisions Network supports general practice and their practice teams and drives the implementation of innovative health strategies.
- ADGP, through the Divisions Network, works to integrate general practice with other sectors of the health system, both government and non-government, to deliver high quality care to the Australian community.
 - ADGP is committed to promoting the health of all Australians by supporting the role of Divisions in the nation's primary health care system.

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