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Mental Health Plan *funding* welcomed but overlooking GP-led care a backward step

The Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) says the messages about significantly funding mental health services are being heeded, following the release of the Federal Opposition's *Direct Action Plan for Better Mental Health*.

AGPN Chair, Dr Emil Djakic says funding components of the plan are welcome, particularly the \$225m investment in additional headspace services and the \$440m for early psychosis intervention centres (EPPIC).

"This funding commitment very much reflects the AGPN's Federal Budget submission and it is what the mental health sector needs," Dr Djakic said.

"This funding plan outlined by the Opposition very much tackles the early intervention and treatment end of mental health services but an equal investment in prevention and community-based mental health services is crucial to a cost-effective mental health care system," he said.

"High prevalence – high burden mental health problems, such as depression, are best managed and more cost-effective when managed at the community level, but to do this, a cohesive system of primary mental health care is needed.

"The Divisions Network already delivers psychological services to primary mental health care patients through the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) program; a well established part of the mental health service landscape.

"Failure to support further development of Divisions through Primary Health Care Organisations is a seriously flawed strategy," he said.

"To suggest that this essential infrastructure and these services to patients be scrapped, would be a step backwards.

"What we need is a further investment into this program and the infrastructure that delivers ATAPS," Dr Djakic said.

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