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The nations Practice Nurses come to Melbourne

More than 130 Practice Nurse Network Officers from all over Australia will converge on Melbourne this Wednesday and Thursday for the fourth Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) National Nursing in General Practice Forum 2010.

The annual conference showcases practice nursing models which support general practice and celebrates their role in multidisciplinary teams, says AGPN Chair Dr Emil Djakic.

"The conference is a great way for Practice Nurse Network Officers to meet colleagues, share knowledge, skills and resources with each other and provides an opportunity to review their work in practices.

"Research shows Practice Nurses bring an added dimension to care and the patient experience of care as part of the general practice team. Working alongside General Practitioners (GPs) nurses support GPs, help patients and improve care outcomes," said Dr Djakic.

Professor Grant Russell a GP and Director of Monash University's Academic Primary Care Research Unit is this year's keynote speaker.

Dr Russel lead a study which investigated the role of a Nurse Practitioner in general practice multidisciplinary teams in Ottawa, Canada.

The study found there were positives such as highly skilled nurses sharing their knowledge and care with patients and negatives like their scope of work being limited which often lead to Nurse Practitioners deciding to leave and work independently.

Dr Djakic said AGPN had long campaigned for every practice in Australia to employ at least one Practice Nurse and continued to push for their role to encompass their full scope of practice.

"We know practices employing a Practice Nurse see more than 800 extra patients each year, but there is more Practice Nurses can offer our patients, there needs to be support for practices to employ those skills fully," he said.

In its Federal Budget submission AGPN encourages the government to extend the Practice Incentive Program so all general practices are able to have a Practice Nurse, resulting in better patient care.

"Through the extension of the program it will help us deal with the anticipated tsunami of chronic disease resulting from the ageing population, which was highlighted in the recent intergenerational report," said Dr Djakic.

A full copy of AGPN's Federal Budget submission and National Nursing in General Practice Forum 2010 program can be downloaded at www.agpn.com.au.

For media interviews and to arrange media accreditation please phone AGPN Communications Officer Ben Graham on 02 6228 0828 or 0430 586 022.