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Shadow Ministry for Health a positive sign for primary health care

The Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) says the appointment of a specific position dedicated to primary health care in the Opposition's Shadow Ministry for Health is a welcome recognition of the importance of general practice and other primary health carers to achieving better health outcomes.

AGPN Chair Dr Emil Djakic said the inclusion of primary health care, along with mental health and ageing, resulted in a very well rounded Shadow Health Ministry.

"We welcome the reappointment of Peter Dutton MP as Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing as this adds to the consistency the health sector is receiving at the Federal political level, following the reappointment Nicola Roxon MP by the Gillard Government," Dr Djakic said.

"It's clear that mental health and ageing, with a particular focus on general practice and other primary health care, are the 'big ticket' health items that will set the political scene for both sides of Parliament," Dr Djakic said.

"The Opposition's junior Ministry of Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells for Ageing and Mental Health, Parliamentary Secretary Dr Andrew Southcott MP for Primary Healthcare and Parliamentary Secretary Dr Andrew Laming MP for Regional Health Services and Indigenous Health, indicates the Opposition is keen to cover as many bases as possible in health," he said.

"As Australia's leading agency for primary health care services through a Network of general practice divisions across the country, AGPN looks forward to learning more about the Opposition's plans and reforms for primary health care for this country," he said.

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“There is international evidence that national health care systems with strong primary health care infrastructure have healthier populations, fewer health-related disparities and lower overall costs for health care. A general practice and primary health care oriented system delivers better care and outcomes for individuals and communities.

“We are keen to work with the Shadow Health Ministry to ensure there is a strong focus in its policies on the need for reorientation and structural reform of the health system to achieve the better health outcomes realisable through better integrated and organised primary health care,” Dr Djakic said.

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