Media Release

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Reforming the health system a step in the right direction

Brisbane, QLD, Tuesday 8 March 2010

The national health reform announcement last week by Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd, MP provide the opportunity for better health for all local residents but only if the Commonwealth acts quickly to strengthen the primary health care sector, says Dr John Kastrissios, General Practice Queensland former Board Chair.

“While General Practice Queensland welcomes the moves to improve our local public hospital system, real change – prevention of unnecessary illness and reductions in Australia’s high hospitalisation rates – will only occur through strengthened primary health care based around general practice,” Dr Kastrissios said.

Dr Kastrissios stressed the need for the government to maintain two sectors in health care, hospital and primary, and utilise the relationship crossover these have in regional areas.

“A reformed primary health care system must have general practice at its centre and quarantined funding distinctly separate to the acute sector.

“We know that this system works and by maintaining the same financial processes (quarantined funding) it ensures that the money is not syphoned off into the acute sector.

“Only separate primary health care organisations with a direct funding link will give us a sustainable health system,” said Dr Kastrissios.

The government’s focus on primary health care will help General Practice Queensland continue its work that enables the development of effective partnerships to implement programs to prevent and/or better manage the health of Queenslanders.

He noted that while last week’s announcement was a good start the government would need to act on these changes and release the other stages of the reform agenda in a timely manner.

General Practice Queensland looks forward to the rest of the government’s health reform agenda and working with government to secure and improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians.
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*General Practice Queensland* provides strategic leadership, advocacy and representation for its member divisions and general practice.

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