3 March 2011

**GPs supported to prevent chronic disease**

Queensland GPs now have improved access to information and support which will help meet the health needs of type 2 diabetes sufferers across the state.

Health Minister Geoff Wilson who launched the *Diabetes Connect* initiative today at General Practice Queensland’s (GPQ) March 2011 Queensland Divisions Forum said it would mean better resources for GPs and ultimately better health for Queenslanders.

“This $900,000 Government funded program has been developed alongside GPQ to help combat a growing diabetes threat in our state,” Mr Wilson said.

“It is an important part of the Bligh Government’s $7.5 million state-wide diabetes action plan to combat this largely preventable disease.

“It recognises not only the growth in the number of patients developing diabetes, but the increase in patients requiring more complex and diverse care in our communities.”

Mr Wilson said that by 2016, poor diet, physical inactivity and rising obesity are predicted to fuel a 17 per cent increase in the burden of type 2 diabetes.

“The *Diabetes Connect* initiative will deliver professional development workshops across Queensland, and expand the state-wide web based iHealth Care+ Directory to include local diabetes services,” Mr Wilson said.

“The *Diabetes Connect* workshops will be scheduled across the state over two years, with participation recognised through Queensland Health certificates of recognition.

“These workshops will bring together general practitioners, practice staff and key health and community service providers in a joint learning setting to share treatment methods and best practice.

“The expansion of the state-wide iHealth Care+ Directory to include diabetes services will also ensure GPs can link patients with all available support services more quickly – earlier in the course of their disease,”

The iHealth Care+ Directory will be available and accessible by all general practices, allied health professionals and specialists and staff of Queensland Health.

General Practice Queensland (GPQ) Board Director, Dr John Kastrissios, said, both these new initiatives recognise that general practice is fundamental in helping to shift the way diabetes care is managed.

“Both initiatives support general practice and patients by providing both improved education and information,” Dr John Kastrissios said.

“These initiatives are fundamental in their aim to respond not only to the growth in the number of patients developing diabetes, but the growth in patients requiring more complex and diverse care in our communities”, he said.

Key type 2 diabetes facts:
About 300,000 people are now living with type 2 diabetes in Queensland.

For every one person diagnosed with diabetes, up to one other person was undiagnosed.

There are currently 60 people newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes each day, which is almost 23,000 new cases in Queensland each year.

By 2016, type 2 diabetes is projected to become the third largest single cause of disease burden in Queensland.

The number of Queenslanders with type 2 diabetes is expected to double by 2033.

Diabetes is the major cause of blindness in children and adults less than 60 years of age, and is a major reason for patients developing kidney failure.

The total health system cost of diabetes in Queensland (hospital, out of hospital medical services, pharmaceutical, allied health and research costs) is estimated at $190 million per year, with a total cost of $6.9 billion to the Queensland economy.

Health costs for diabetes are predicted to increase five fold over the next 30 years.

For more information visit

ENDS

Media contact: Ministers Office - 322 52475
General Practice Queensland – 0400 561 913