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Ambitious health reforms recognise general practice role

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The Rudd Government’s proposed national health agenda recognises the central role of general practice in our health system, says Dr John Kastrissios, General Practice Queensland Board Chair.

“What has been proposed by Government will change the way Australia looks at primary health care and will lead to real community based health care solutions,” said Dr Kastrissios.

The recommendations from the Federal Governments National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC) report would see an overhaul to the way primary health care is delivered.

“What we will see is a more holistic approach to finding health solutions for people, with general practice playing a central role within that. This will result in better quality patient care, especially for the chronically ill and disadvantaged groups like the Indigenous population,” said Dr Kastrissios.

He also applauded the Commission’s proposals to base their reform recommendations on strengthening general practice and primary health care.

“The reality is that we will only relieve the pressure on our hospitals unless we first put in place a stronger primary health care system,” Dr Kastrissios said.

He pointed to the growing burden of chronic illness diseases like diabetes, heart disease, mental health which are common in Queensland and growing concerns all around Australia, along with other diseases associated with ageing – as illnesses best treated in the community.

“To tackle chronic disease and the major health inequalities which exist in Australia, we must follow the lead of other developed nations and establish a strong, organised primary health care system, built on general practice.”

He said it was a ‘landmark day’ for general practice and primary health care which received long awaited recognition GPs and their general practice teams.
“We know this is the best way forward for the health system and we will work with Government at every level to ensure the next stages in the consultation process has general practice input and comment,” s/he said.

“The Government has listened to the evidence in health care – the evidence says primary health care models provide cost effective, best practice care,” Dr Kastrissios said.

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