



**AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INC**

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**General Practice Week (15-21 June)
UTILISING GENERAL PRACTICE NURSES BETTER**

AMA(SA) has joined the chorus of AMA branches again calling on the Rudd Government to collaborate with General Practitioners to improve the use of general practice nurses and help GPs to expand access to care.

As part of **General Practice Week**, AMA(SA) wants the Government to expand the 'for and on behalf of' Medicare rebate for GPs with practice nurses.

AMA(SA) President, Dr Peter Ford, said GPs are already working effectively with practice nurses but more could be done.

"Expanding the Medicare rebate would enable GPs to work more efficiently with their practice nurses, and therefore, be able to see more patients and provide more service to patients," he said.

"General practice is already using nurses to assist in patient care and management under medical supervision but more support for general practice nurses is needed."

There are more than 7,700 practice nurses as part of general practice throughout the country – 663 of which are in South Australia.

"With about eight per cent of practice nurses based here, the Rudd Government really needs to put its support in the right place to ensure our GPs are leading the way to better health through the coordination of patient care.

"Nurses employed in general practice are able to take some pressure off GPs, allowing them to carry out more consultations and put in place improved team-based care arrangements.

AMA(SA) also wants the Rudd Government to extend grants to all GP practices in South Australia to employ practice nurses, rather than just rural and remote areas.

"General practice nurses, working for, and on behalf of, doctors, frees up a GP's time to treat acute conditions, concentrate on more complex medical problems, coordinate care arrangements for patients with chronic illness and practise preventative medicine."

Practice nurses already assist GPs with services such as immunisations, wound management, chronic disease monitoring, and the promotion and delivery of health education.

"By employing the skills of practice nurses, GPs can improve access for their practice and offer a wider range of services to patients," he said.

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