



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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

Postal: PO Box 134 North Adelaide SA 5006  
First Floor Newland House 80 Brougham Place North Adelaide SA 5006  
Phone: (08) 8267 4355 Fax: (08) 8267 5349  
Email: [admin@amasa.org.au](mailto:admin@amasa.org.au) Web site: [www.amasa.org.au](http://www.amasa.org.au)

**General Practice Week (15-21 June)  
REFORM MBS FOR PATIENT BENEFITS**

AMA(SA) President, Dr Peter Ford said the Rudd Government must reform the Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS) to better rebate patient's access to GPs.

"The MBS must also be properly indexed, aligned with increasing costs," he said.

"The current Medicare Benefits Schedule is complex and needs to be updated to meet changing patient needs."

Over the past 15 years, the number of GP consultation items had increased four-fold; the demand is higher and more complex.

Dr Ford said GPs needed to spend more time with their patients than ever before.

"Patients need a rebate system that supports them when they see a doctor for acute care, for more chronic or complex problems, and for preventative medicine.

"Studies show that patients who have access to longer consultations with their GPs use other areas of the health system less often - saving the health system and the community money," he said.

Dr Ford said GPs were able to assess the patient's total needs, coordinate care and meet those needs.

"General Practice best preserves the privacy and dignity of patients in the primary care setting.

“We need a modern MBS that supports the patient’s access to the high-quality care that is delivered in General Practice. That care must be clinically effective and cost efficient.

“The MBS should support patients spending more time with their local doctor. GPs should be able to focus more on tackling chronic disease and delivering preventative health care,” he said.

Eighty per cent of Australians visit a GP at least once a year and spend more time with their GP than people in many other countries.

Recent Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) data showed that GPs are playing a key role in the fight against chronic disease – including high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, skin conditions and cardiovascular disease.

The AIHW said the number of encounters for chronic disease rose from 46.5 per 100 encounters in 1998/99 to 52.1 per 100 encounters in 2006/07.

**General Practice Week** (15-21 June) highlights the importance of general practice in our healthcare system and shows that GPs are leading the way to better health.

ENDS

---

**18 June 2008**

**Contact:** Dr Peter Ford (08) 8267 4355 or after-hours (08) 8378 3458