

## AAAPC PRESS RELEASE – July 2014

### Impact of 2014 Federal Budget on primary care teaching and research

The Australian Association for Academic Primary Care (AAAPC) represents teachers and researchers in primary care.

The 2014 federal budget contains a number of recommendations which impact on primary care teaching and research.

- Increase in the Practice Incentive Payment for general practices providing teaching to medical students.

**AAAPC comment:** The increased payment will help compensate practices for the drop in practice income when general practice supervisors are spending time teaching students. It recognises the value to medical education of experience in general practice and will assist in recruitment and retention of high quality teaching practices.

- Proposed changes to general practice vocational training. These include:
  - expansion of the number of GP training places through the Australian General Practice Training program to 1500 per year by 2015;
  - the cessation of funding of General Practice Education and Training from the end of 2014 and the consolidation of its functions into the Department of Health;
  - the cessation of Commonwealth funding for the Prevocational General Practice Placements Program; *and*
  - changes to general practice vocational training with a competitive tendering process for a smaller number of regional provider organisations from 2016 onwards.

**AAAPC comment:** The proposed changes must be implemented without putting at risk the high quality of general practice training. AAAPC supports the continuation of the apprenticeship model where general practice registrars are placed in teaching practices in the community with experienced GPs. The regional networks of teaching practices must be valued and resourced appropriately.

Registrar training must be underpinned by evidence based medical education and registrars need to be trained to implement evidence based practice.

**AAAPC comments:-**

- A role for universities?

AAAPC supports the involvement of Universities in vocational training and the development of blended learning models. University involvement has the potential to enhance multidisciplinary learning across medical, nursing and allied health disciplines, and to increase vertical integration in learning and teaching from undergraduate medical education through to vocational training.

- GP academic registrars

AAAPC strongly supports the continuation and expansion of the GP academic registrars positions, currently funded through the Australian General Practice Training. The Academic Registrar positions have been fundamental to engaging young general practitioners in research and teaching and laying the foundation for the future academic general practice workforce.

Other proposed changes

- Patient co-payment

The proposal is to implement a patient co-payment for GP services, pathology and radiology and changes to primary health care organisations.

**AAAPC comment:** This proposal may damage primary care education because the downstream effects on primary care are uncertain. Education and research is often the first pair of casualties in any threat to medical viability.

- Change from Medicare Locals to Primary Health Networks

**AAAPC comment:** The early gains made by Medicare Locals need to be successfully transitioned to Primary health networks. The establishment of PHNs provides opportunities for renewed engagement between primary health care organisations and academic institutions. AAAPC recommends that PHNs are required to demonstrate collaboration with the University sector especially in areas such as population health planning, developing new models of care and developing robust evaluation and research strategies for PHNs that will lead to better integrated and more cost-effective health care delivery.

- Withdrawal of national support for Nursing in General Practice

**AAAPC comment:** we support the development of primary health care nursing in Australia, particularly the funding (through Medicare Locals) of demonstration projects for nurse-led clinics, as these projects were testing innovations for better access for patients with long term conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and arthritis.

**AAAPC supports the development of accreditation for primary care nurses, it is only with the appropriate skill set and recognised credentialing of primary care nursing that the full potential will be reached.**

AAAPC supports the the expansion of nursing and allied health scholarships.

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