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## **GENERAL PRACTICE CONTINUES TO PLAY CENTRAL ROLE IN FIGHT AGAINST COVID**

The AMA welcomes the Government's recognition today that general practice must continue to play a frontline role in supporting patients with COVID-19 as Australia reopens and COVID-19 becomes endemic in the community.

The Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, today announced additional measures to support GPs to care for COVID-19 patients in the community.

AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid said: "With high rates of vaccination, most people with symptoms of COVID-19 will experience mild-to-moderate illness and GPs are well equipped to care for these patients, taking significant pressure off our hospital system."

The AMA has been calling on the Government to provide support for GPs in caring for COVID-19 positive patients and has been engaged in discussions with the Minister's office and Department of Health over several weeks, including with respect to necessary funding, the provision of pulse oximeters, the future role of GP Respiratory Clinics, support for home visits and the development of local care pathways.

Dr Khorshid said the AMA would work through the fine detail with the Government and Department of Health as it seeks to implement this new support package that, on the face of it, addresses a number of issues raised in earlier discussions by the AMA.

Confirmation of the roll out of the COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Program yesterday by the Government is also good news as this will ensure that vaccinated Australians can continue to enjoy high levels of protection against the virus and live relatively normal day-to-day lives.

Dr Khorshid said: "General practice has been the backbone of the Government's COVID-19 vaccination roll out with GPs playing a fundamental role in the achievement of world-leading vaccination rates, proactively reaching out to their patients as well as explaining the benefits of vaccination to patients who have been unsure.

"To encourage similarly high levels of take up of boosters it will be critical for the Government to support GPs to take a very proactive approach to contacting patients, sending out reminders and explaining the benefits of getting a booster shot - work that is not currently adequately funded under Medicare arrangements.

"It is also vitally important that unvaccinated Australian's continue to come forward for vaccination because COVID-19 is quickly becoming a disease of the unvaccinated with potentially very serious health impacts."

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