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## **AMA SAYS URGENT CARE CENTRES NOT SOLUTION TO AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH CRISIS**

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) is unconvinced by Labor's plan to develop 50 urgent care centres because they will not tackle the major problems facing Australia's health system.

"These centres will do little to relieve the hospital logjam, will further fragment care and will unfairly compete with nearby general practices which, without this government funding, will not be able to keep their doors open after hours."

AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid said the plan acknowledges the costs faced by general practices in opening after hours but instead of enabling thousands of practices across the country to improve their offering to patients, it focusses on only 50 practices, using a model reminiscent of the failed Rudd era GP Super Clinics.

"Medicare reform is urgently needed to enable general practices to deliver the primary care that our patients need. Rather than piecemeal announcements, both major political parties need to tackle the real issues facing our health system and a commitment to properly funding the Government's 10 Year Primary Health Care Plan implementation would be a good start."

"The AMA is yet to see a real vision for the health system from any of the major parties – all we have seen so far are short-term suggestions aimed at winning an election."

The AMA today launched the [Modernise Medicare](#) campaign that highlights key reforms that are required to ensure general practice has a strong future. The ideas in this campaign are broadly supported across general practice, yet the Coalition has failed to provide any funding for these reforms despite previous assurances.

Dr Khorshid said that the Federal Government's recent launch of the 10 Year Primary Health Care Plan was welcome, but a plan without funding is little more than a few pieces of paper.

"Many of the key reforms outlined in the AMA's [Framework for Primary Care](#) are yet to be included in policy platforms and are further options that must be considered by the incoming government.

"If Labor wants to improve access to after-hours care for Australians, an obvious step would be to amend the definition of 'after hours' to commence at 6pm on weekdays and 12 noon on a Saturday. This will increase the Medicare rebate for Australians accessing these services and therefore reduce out of pocket costs. This is just one of the reforms proposed by our Modernise Medicare campaign.

"The AMA wants a genuine conversation on the future of Australia's health system. We have provided costed plans that will deliver real improvements to health outcomes while ensuring we have the capacity to respond as our health needs change in coming years. We are yet to see any party join this conversation."

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