

Friday, 19 May 2023

Let's celebrate the family doctors at the heart of healthcare

The special role played by family doctors is celebrated today on World Family Doctor Day.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said this year's theme "*Family Doctors: The Heart of Healthcare*" was a welcome reminder of the role GPs play, both in the healthcare system and in the lives of patients.

"Today gives us an opportunity to reflect on just how special the relationship is between family doctors and patients," Professor Robson said.

GPs are the highest trained general health professional, with ten to fifteen years of formal training, extensive clinical experience and a commitment to ongoing professional development.

The World Family Doctor Day campaign highlights the continuity of care, patient-centered care, integrated care and community engagement that GPs provide.

Professor Robson said this would resonate with many Australians as they reflect on their personal relationship and their family's relationship with their GP.

"GPs are at the very heart of patient care in Australia, with around 85 per cent of people seeing a GP each year, and more than 95 per cent of patients attending the same practice. That ongoing relationship and continuity of care, ensures Australians can feel safe knowing their doctor knows their healthcare needs now and into the future."

Professor Robson applauded GPs for their hard work and dedication to their patients, especially in the face of the pandemic and the stress and strain this placed on top of an already demanding workload.

"Our GPs are really special. Australians thank them for being at the front line of healthcare, keeping themselves and their communities safe and healthy whilst under incredible pressures and uncertain circumstances.

"GPs are the first point of call in our health system, often providing care for patients and their families from childhood to their adult years. This is a long-term relationship.

"GPs treat patients as a whole person, using their deep clinical knowledge to assess all a patient's health needs rather than just focusing on a symptom or a complaint. Importantly, they work with other medical specialists and health professionals to ensure that patients get the right care from the right health professional as part of a well-coordinated team. Australia has a great health system, built on the solid foundation of general practice."

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