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**AMA ENCOURAGES CAREFUL AND RESPONSIBLE PRESCRIBING
 AND USE OF ANTIBIOTICS**

Antibiotic Awareness Week, 16-22 November 2015

The AMA is using Antibiotics Awareness Week to heighten public awareness that the over-prescribing of antibiotics is a threat to the wellbeing of Australians.

Antibiotic Awareness Week, which is endorsed by the World Health Organisation and coordinated locally by NPS MedicineWise, is aimed at getting all Australians to play a part in addressing the threat of antimicrobial resistance.

AMA President, Professor Brian Owler, said today that when antibiotics are taken unnecessarily or incorrectly, it encourages the development of dangerous antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Professor Owler said that antibiotics are an important part of medicine, but their overuse or incorrect use could lessen their effectiveness.

“It is vital that antibiotics are prescribed and used carefully and responsibly,” Professor Owler said.

“The AMA supports greater awareness and education for doctors and patients to ensure that antibiotics can continue effectively performing their key role in treating and preventing infections, and keeping Australians healthy.”

The AMA encourages doctors to be informed about when antibiotics are clinically appropriate. Antibiotics should only be prescribed:

- when the benefits to the patient is likely to be substantial;
- as recommended by clinical guidelines and pathologists; and
- at the appropriate dose and duration.

It is also important that patients understand that:

- antibiotics are only effective against bacteria, and not viruses. That means they are not effective against colds and the flu; and
- if antibiotics are prescribed for an infection, the whole course should be taken as directed.

The AMA commends the extensive educational material developed by NPS MedicineWise for doctors and patients, which can be found at <http://www.nps.org.au/about-us/what-we-do/campaigns-events/antibiotic-awareness-week>

The Government provided funding in the 2013-14 Budget to support the development and implementation of a new national strategy to prevent and contain anti-microbial resistance. In June 2015, the *National Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy 2015-19* was released by the Government, detailing objectives and activities in the healthcare, agriculture, and veterinary sectors to reduce antimicrobial resistance

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