



**AMA Family
Doctor Week 2015**
YOU AND YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR:
THE BEST PARTNERSHIP IN HEALTH



**FAMILY DOCTORS – THE FIRST PORT OF CALL FOR BETTER
MENTAL HEALTH**

AMA FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK, 19-25 July 2015

You and Your Family Doctor: the best partnership in health

During Family Doctor Week, the AMA is highlighting the important role played by GPs in looking after the mental health of their patients and their local communities.

AMA President, Professor Brian Owler, said today that patients who have an established relationship with their GP are more at ease in discussing any mental health concerns with their family doctor, and local GPs are an easily accessible confidant for people wanting to start a confidential conversation about their mental health with a highly trained medical professional.

“GPs are often the first port of call for people with mental health concerns,” Professor Owler said.

“The confidence and trust of the GP-patient relationship allows people to open up about mental health concerns, and the GP can manage the patient’s care and refer them to the appropriate health professionals for ongoing care.

“Australians have come a long way in their awareness of mental illness and their ability to talk openly about formerly taboo subjects.

“This conversation must continue to ensure more people speak out if they are concerned about the wellbeing of a loved one, or notice a change in their own mental health.

“Mental illness comes in many forms, from psychosis to mood disorders, and the tragic results can include self-harm, harm to others, and suicide.

“With an average of seven Australians taking their own lives every day, many Australians can say that they know someone touched by the tragedy of suicide.

“Suicide is the leading cause of death for men and women under the aged of 34.

“It can be hard for people to talk about how they feel and how they are functioning in daily life, but local GPs are an ideal starting point to get the appropriate advice and care.

“Feeling anxious or overwhelmed, having interrupted sleep, or feeling disengaged from family, work, and life are warning signs that people might need assistance.

“When someone feels emotionally or mentally unwell, the trusted relationship developed with a family doctor is vital.”

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As part of Family Doctor Week 2015, the AMA has produced a number of videos highlighting the important contribution family doctors make to the health of the nation, including:

- General Practice: More a Passion than a Job
- Prevention and Care throughout Life
- Plan for Pharmacists in General Practice

All the videos can be downloaded from the AMA Family Doctor Week website at <https://ama.com.au/family-doctor-week-2015>

AMA Family Doctor Week is proudly sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Cutcher & Neale, and AMEX.

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CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Odette Visser 02 6270 5412 / 0427 209 753

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