



**AMA Family
Doctor Week 2019**

YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR AND YOU:
PARTNERING FOR HEALTH



URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO ENSURE THE FUTURE FAMILY DOCTOR WORKFORCE

AMA FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK, 21-27 July 2019

Your Family Doctor and You: Partnering for Health

The AMA is warning that Australian communities will miss out on the vital health care provided by high-quality family doctors unless there is urgent action to encourage medical students and young doctors to choose general practice as their medical specialty.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, a Melbourne GP for more than 30 years, said today that it is a tragedy that GP training places are going unfilled.

“Since 2015, we have seen a 20 per cent fall in the number of applications for GP training, and a six per cent drop in the number of first year GP training posts filled,” Dr Bartone said.

“In 2019, 63 first year GP training places went unfilled even though multiple recruitment rounds were initiated.

“This is despite Australia now graduating around 3700 medical students each year. This is an incredibly ominous sign for the future of the general practice workforce.

“It is vital that general practice is seen as a desirable career choice.

“The AMA is working hard to ensure that those doctors who want to specialise in general practice are not discouraged from doing so.

“We need to offer medical graduates who want to pursue a career in general practice positive training experiences that highlight the diversity of work and whole-of-patient care it offers, so that they have a proper understanding and appreciation of general practice, how it functions, and the role it plays in the health system.

“We also need to make sure our GPs and GP registrars work and train in supportive and rewarding environments.”

Dr Bartone said that GP registrars have reported to the AMA a lack of parity with their remuneration and working conditions compared to other specialist trainee colleagues as they move out of the hospital environment.

“This disparity can influence their decision-making when deciding on what speciality to further train in,” Dr Bartone said.

“This is a decision made even more difficult because they are also managing their significant post-graduate environment, which includes juggling their education fees and their own evolving life cycle pressures, and often graduating much later in life than other professions.

“We must work to ensure that general practice is a desirable career option. All communities, especially many in rural, regional and remote Australia, need local family doctors to meet current and future health care needs.

“The AMA is talking to its GP and GP registrar members, as well as the Federal Government, about how we can address the lack of parity in remuneration and lack of portability of leave and other entitlements that GP registrars experience when they shift from a hospital to general practice.

“We know that lack of flexibility in employment arrangements and lack of maternity or paternity leave can add barriers to choosing general practice. This must be fixed.

“We must also provide greater support for GP supervisors and practices.

“Supervising practices commit significant resources to training the next generation of GPs and are the key to turning things around.

“They contribute significantly to training, but many suffer a reduction in practice income as a result.

“We need a better employment model that supports GP registrars and GP supervisors alike.

“Australia has a great primary care system that helps deliver great health care outcomes at a very modest cost.

“GP registrars are the future of general practice. Australia needs more of them.”

This will be a priority issue for the AMA in the months ahead.

Follow all the action on Twitter: #amafdw19 and Family Doctor Week [website](#)

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