

**Australian Medical Association Limited**  
**ABN 37 008 426 793**

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604  
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499  
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**GP SUPPORT KEY TO SUCCESS OF HEALTH CARE HOMES**

Welcoming today’s announcement of the 10 Primary Health Network Regions to conduct the Government’s trial of the Government’s Health Care Homes initiative, AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said that GPs must be properly resourced and supported to make the trial – and the concept – a success.

Dr Gannon said the Health Care Home is potentially one of the biggest reforms to Medicare in decades.

“The AMA is delighted that the Government is using the Health Care Home trial to launch its renewed commitment to general practice and primary care,” Dr Gannon said.

“We especially welcome the Prime Minister’s role in actively promoting this key plank of the Coalition’s health platform for the new term of Parliament.

“The AMA shares the Government’s vision for the Health Care Home, and we have been actively engaged in its development.

“Under the model, patients have a continuing relationship with a particular GP to coordinate the care delivered by all members of the patient’s care team.

“We know from overseas experience that the model has the potential to support better patient outcomes, and can help to keep patients out of hospital. It aims to provide more support for patients, particularly those with more serious chronic and complex conditions.

“Importantly, it recognises the fundamental role of a patient’s family doctor who can provide holistic and longitudinal care and, in leading the multidisciplinary care team, safeguard the appropriateness and continuity of care.”

Dr Gannon said that GPs are managing more chronic disease, but in recent times their practices have faced substantial financial pressure due to the Medicare freeze and a range of other funding cuts.

“The reality is that GPs cannot afford to deliver enhanced care to patients with no extra support,” Dr Gannon said.

“There is no new funding for the Health Care Homes trial. Money has been shifted from other areas of the health budget.

“If the Health Care Homes funding model is not right, GPs will not engage with the trial, and the model will struggle to succeed.

“We urge the Government to provide new funding and resources for the trial, and lift the Medicare freeze and other burdens from GPs, in order to give this exciting primary care reform every chance of success,” Dr Gannon said.

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CONTACT: John Flannery

02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761