



**AMA Family
Doctor Week 2019**

YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR AND YOU:
PARTNERING FOR HEALTH



AIHW REPORT CONFIRMS THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY DOCTORS

AMA FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK, 21-27 July 2019

Your Family Doctor and You: Partnering for Health

A recent major report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has confirmed that GPs are doing an outstanding job looking after their patients' health, and that patients with a regular GP enjoy a smoother journey through the health system.

Released earlier this month, the report - *Coordination of health care: experiences of information sharing between providers for patients aged 45 and over* - provides further evidence of the importance of developing a relationship with a usual GP.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that the report, which uses data from the 2016 Survey of Health Care, reinforces the theme of AMA Family Doctor Week 2019 – *Your Family Doctor and You: Partnering for Health*.

Dr Bartone said that 96 per cent of surveyed patients with a usual GP reported that their health care needs were known by their GP and that their test, X-ray, or scan results were always available.

“The report stresses the vital role of family doctors in helping their patients navigate the health system,” Dr Bartone said.

“When patients have to go to other specialists, the emergency department at the hospital, or to allied health care providers, the GP ensures that patient information is shared and records are kept.

“The report shows that patients with a usual GP are three times more likely to have the information from their most recent specialist visit and twice as likely to have their information following a visit to the emergency department than patients without a usual GP.

“This backs Productivity Commission data from earlier this year that found that 91.8 per cent of patients said their GP always or often listened to them, 94.1 per cent said that the GP always or often showed them respect, and 90.7 per cent said the GP always spent enough time with them.

“Clearly, Australia’s GPs are doing a fantastic job.

“Our dedicated GPs have continued to provide exceptional care despite the impact of the Medicare patient rebate freeze and the rising cost of running their businesses.

“It is crucial that more research like this is conducted and released. The AMA has been calling for more research funding to examine the current pressures in primary care and general practice.”

Dr Bartone said more research is also needed to examine the impact of other health professions encroaching on the scope of practice of family doctors.

“We are increasingly seeing efforts by pharmacies, for example, to provide ‘health checks’ and prescribe medicines in pharmacies – often with the support of governments looking to make budget savings,” Dr Bartone said.

“These moves will only fragment the care that Australians receive and sacrifice quality care under the guise of convenience and accessibility.

“The recently-launched Bupa-Terry White Chemist deal, which is asking Bupa members to pay for health checks at the pharmacy, is one example that flies in the face of all the available evidence, which supports better health outcomes when patients partner with their usual GP.

“Every time a patient is lured into a ‘health check’, vaccination, or other medical-related service provided in a pharmacy, it is a missed opportunity for the provision of quality health care from a family doctor.

“Continuity of care and sharing of information is all-important. GPs identify emerging risk factors, provide preventive advice, and check on patients’ holistic wellbeing.

“The AIHW report is a timely reminder people should find a usual GP or general practice if they don’t already have one.

“Family doctors provide trusted, quality health care throughout all stages of life,” Dr Bartone said.

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

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