



# AMA

## TASMANIA

### **MEDIA RELEASE – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

#### **MEDICARE LOCALS – AMA PROPOSES A BETTER MODEL**

The AMA today released its Position Statement on Medicare Locals and urged the Government to adopt the AMA recommendations to establish better primary health care organisations (PHCOs) than the currently proposed Medicare Locals model.

AMA Tasmania President, Dr Michael Aizen, said today that “the main function of Medicare Locals must be to better support the role of the GP in delivering services to patients”.

“GPs are the highest trained practitioners in the primary health care setting and have a key role in the coordination and management of care for patients,” Dr Aizen said.

“Across Australia they provide 120 million services to patients each year. “Medicare Locals could be useful to GPs by supporting them in carrying out their role and assisting them in accessing allied health services in the community.

Dr. Aizen went on to say, “There must be no fundholding arrangements for GP and other specialist services and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicines.

“Local doctors must be on the Boards of Medical Locals and have leadership roles on other governance committees.

“These important arrangements and conditions are missing from the Government’s guidelines, which means the AMA cannot support Medicare Locals as currently proposed.

“We call on the Government to defer the current processes to establish Medicare Locals so that there can be proper consultation with the medical profession about the future of primary care in this country.

“Many stakeholders and commentators see problems with the proposed Medicare Locals”.

“Even those who offer their support qualify that support with concerns about the proposed structure and governance of Medicare Locals, especially how they will coordinate care between primary and acute care settings”.

“The AMA Position Statement contains sensible achievable recommendations to deliver quality primary care services to the Australian community,” Dr Aizen said.

The AMA Position Statement on Medicare Locals is on the AMA website at <http://ama.com.au/node/6500>

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