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National Rural Faculty



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

College of GPs welcomes rural scholarship increase

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) welcomes the federal government's announcement that they will double scholarships for allied health clinical placements in rural areas and establish a locum scheme to support 1,000 allied health workers over the next decade.

In the announcement that the scholarships will double from 100 to 200 each year, Prime Minister Rudd also stated that, in major cities, there are 354 allied health professionals per 100,000 people but only 64 workers per 100,000 people in very remote areas of Australia.

Dr Kathryn Kirkpatrick, Chair of the RACGP's National Rural Faculty, said that when the whole of rural Australia is considered, the allied health professional increases are small and will be diluted by the extreme need that currently exists.

"It is great to have the recognition that allied health needs incentives for its students and a locum scheme for relief of those working in rural and remote areas.

"However, for rural GPs to work effectively in multidisciplinary teams to improve the health outcomes of rural communities and individual patients, there must be an adequate supply of well trained, allied health practitioners including physiotherapists, dieticians, occupational therapists and speech pathologists, coupled with locums, to support them," she said.

The college is committed to work with all levels of government to improve access to high quality care to better meet the needs of local communities. To read the RACGP 2010/2011 Federal Budget submission in detail, visit www.racgp.org.au/healthreform.

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About the RACGP

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) sets and maintains the standards for quality clinical practice, education and training, and research in Australian general practice, and represents Australia's urban and rural general practitioners. Visit www.racgp.org.au.