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MEDIA RELEASE

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GPs key to meeting HIV changes and challenges

The global theme of World AIDS Day (1 December 2009) – ‘universal access and human rights’ – draws attention to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners’ (RACGP) emphasis on the importance GPs have in providing people with HIV infection with the tools to live a healthy life.

“High quality general practice care is important for people living with HIV infection. GPs are often the first port of call for people with HIV infection and GPs have an important role in the prevention of HIV and the provision of care and support of Australians living with HIV,” said Dr Chris Mitchell, RACGP President.

“The majority of infectious diseases in the community worldwide are treated by general practitioners.

“As treatments improve for HIV infection, general practitioners around the world are more involved with disease management.

“HIV disease affects many systems of the body, requires long term monitoring and long term psychosocial support: all characteristics of conditions ideally suited to the primary care setting.

“Australian GPs have been involved in the diagnosis and management of HIV infection since the beginning of the epidemic in Australia and continue to play a leading role.

“New management challenges arise everyday as people with HIV live longer, thanks to new treatments. We are now encountering people in their 60s and 70s who have been living with HIV infection for years.

“GPs have witnessed the evolution of HIV disease from life threatening infection to a chronic disease that can and should be managed in a primary care setting.

“We’re here for the long haul and we will continue to help prevent and diagnose HIV infection and support all of our community members living and affected by the HIV epidemic, which is all of us,” said Dr Mitchell.

– **Ends**

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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.