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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release



RACGP *Standards for General Practices* undergo makeover

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) will be issuing the draft 4th edition of the *Standards for general practices* for public consultation this week.

The second round of public consultation for the draft 4th edition of the *Standards for general practices* will run from April to June.

Key changes include:

- Fewer criteria and indicators
- Practices have more choice in demonstrating to surveyors how they implement the *Standards* in their practice
- Explanatory material is summarised

- New criteria to cover:
 - Clinical handover
 - Clinical leadership
 - Patient identification
 - Safe and quality use of medicines
 - Practices will need to use a patient satisfaction survey approved by the RACGP
 - Height adjustable bed, ECG (electrocardiogram) and spirometer have been added to the list of essential equipment

The RACGP received 20 written submissions from individuals (patients and carers) and disability advocate groups (including the Disability Discrimination Commissioner, and Women with Disabilities Australia) supporting the inclusion of height adjustable beds in the *Standards*. Submissions can be viewed at www.racgp.org.au/standards.

Dr Lynton Hudson, Chair of the RACGP National Expert Committee on Standards for General Practices (NECSGP), said that although there may be understandable concerns from practices about the cost of new equipment included in the *Standards*, access to this equipment is important to deliver care to our communities and that the RACGP will continue to advocate with government for better infrastructure support for general practices.

“In the 4th edition, we are adapting the *Standards* to changes that are occurring in primary care. We have addressed issues surrounding managing team-based care and part time GP workforce; more complex medication lists, more sophisticated information technology and the availability of better and more affordable equipment. For example, the cost of a height adjustable bed is less than \$2,000 but the benefits to patients with mobility difficulties and improvement for occupational health and safety is huge,” he said.

“Despite some new indicators in this edition of the *Standards*, there will be fewer indicators overall in comparison with the 3rd edition. The committee has spent considerable time looking at what can be removed or simplified.

Dr Hudson said that feedback from practice teams, consumers, accrediting agencies and other college stakeholders was crucial in determining what changes needed to be made to the *Standards*.

“This enables us to produce a new set of standards that are achievable, feasible and acceptable.”

The draft 4th edition of the RACGP *Standards for general practices* will be available at www.racgp.org.au/standards on 9 April 2010. GPs and practice teams are encouraged to examine the draft and provide feedback to the college. There will be a number of ways GPs and stakeholders can provide their feedback, including email, online survey and written submission.

A field trial will be conducted, in conjunction with the accreditation agencies, between May and July.

“GPs are at the forefront of primary health care in Australia. The vision of the college is that the *Standards* and their assessment is an education process that allows general practice to move forward in continuous quality improvement,” Dr Hudson concluded.

– *ends*

Note to the editors

Want to know who helped revise the RACGP *Standards for general practices*?

- Please see attached factsheet or visit www.racgp.org.au/nsc/standards

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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.