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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release



Setting new standards for general practice

The *RACGP Standards for general practices* (revised 3rd edition), against which general practices are surveyed for accreditation, are under revision by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

“The *RACGP Standards for general practices* are a clear demonstration of the commitment of Australian general practitioners and general practices to high quality care for our communities,” said Dr Chris Mitchell, RACGP President. “To maintain our quality standards, it is time for a targeted review by the profession.”

The RACGP National Expert Committee on Standards for General Practices (NECSGP) will oversee the review and develop processes aimed to complete the *RACGP Standards for general practices* (4th edition) during 2010. It is anticipated that the revised Standards will be launched in October next year at the college’s annual conference, GP’10, in Cairns.

“The 4th edition of the Standards will provide a pragmatic tool for general practitioners that acknowledges the way primary care is rapidly evolving in Australia,” said Dr Lynton Hudson, chairman of the RACGP National Expert Committee on Standards for General Practice (NECSGP).

A new element of the document will be an emphasis on information management standards and their relevance and usefulness for general practice. This may address issues such as the content and structure of electronic health records, maintaining databases and the security of electronic information.

Practices will have 12 months breathing space after the launch of the revised Standards in which they can still choose to be accredited against the 3rd edition of the Standards, or against the 4th edition.

The consultation process, involving a review of the current Standards, has already commenced. GPs, practice nurses, practice managers, reception staff, division staff and surveyors can comment on the 3rd edition via an online survey. Submissions have also been invited from many stakeholders, including consumer groups. The survey closes on 30 November 2009. As drafts are completed the profession and stakeholders will again be invited to provide further feedback. The draft edition will be available for comment during February 2010.

The *RACGP Standards for general practices* have a history going back to the 1990s when they were developed with the aim of creating a template for ongoing of quality improvement in primary health care delivery.

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Notes to editor

General practice accreditation

- Accreditation in general practice was established to promote a culture of quality and safety in Australian general practices
- Accreditation is a voluntary process of quality improvement that will assist general practices to increase efficiency, improve systems, reduce risks and stay current with best practices in general practice
- General practices are currently assessed for accreditation against the *RACGP Standards for general practices* (3rd edition), the benchmark for high quality care in Australian general practice
- 70-80% of Australian general practices are formally accredited against the *RAGGP Standards for general practices*
- Accreditation to RACGP Standards allows services to access Practice Incentive Program (PIP) payments from Medicare
- Accreditation is undertaken through the accreditation organisations
- For more information about the *RACGP Standards for general practices*, visit www.racgp.org.au/standards
- The online survey for GPs and practice staff can be found at <http://racgp.informz.net/survistapro/s.asp?id=1942>. The survey for surveyors can be found at <http://racgp.informz.net/survistapro/s.asp?id=1992>

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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.