



**AMA Family
Doctor Week 2018**

YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR:
HERE FOR YOU



****UNDER EMBARGO 6AM AEST 24 JULY 2018****

**MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING EQUALLY AS
IMPORTANT AS MAINTAINING PHYSICAL HEALTH**

AMA FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK, 22- 28 July 2018

Your Family Doctor: Here for you

During Family Doctor Week 2018, the AMA is sending a strong message that looking after our mental health is just as important as being physically healthy.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that family doctors play a central coordinating role in identifying and treating mental health concerns, and referring patients on to other specialists in the mental health care team when necessary.

Dr Bartone said that, in any given year, 20 per cent of adults and 14 per cent of children and young people will experience a common mental illness.

“Over a lifetime, around 45 per cent of people will experience a mental illness, most commonly anxiety, substance abuse disorders, and mood disorders,” Dr Bartone said.

“Mental health accounts for a significant proportion of the fatal, non-fatal, and total burden of disease in this country.

“Suicide and self-inflicted injuries and anxiety disorders were the leading causes of burden in young people aged 15–24.

“Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in people aged 15–44.

“Ignoring a mental health concern is not a good strategy. The best strategy is for people to talk to their trusted family doctor about any mental health issues.

“The warning signs of deteriorating mental health can include feeling anxious or overwhelmed, having difficulty in getting to or staying asleep, or feeling disengaged from family, work, and life.

“Family doctors understand that it may be difficult to talk about these concerns and are there to assist people to open up about these very personal issues and work together to find solutions.

“Mental health covers a broad range of conditions from common ailments such as phobias and anxiety, through to suicidality and self-harming, grief, and substance abuse disorders, to less prevalent but high impact severe and persistent mental illnesses.

“The GP will listen to patient concerns, identify the condition, work with the patient to develop a treatment or management plan and, if needed, refer them for additional medical specialist or allied health services.

“Mental health conditions are treatable. An early appointment with the family doctor will lead to earlier treatment and much better health outcomes.

“Good mental health means that patients can fully realise their own potential, cope with the stresses of life, and have productive work lives and healthy relationships,” Dr Bartone said.

AMA Family Doctor Week runs from 22 to 28 July.

Follow all the action on Twitter: #amafdw18 and the Family Doctor Week [Website](#)

24 July 2018

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