



**AMA Family
Doctor Week 2019**

YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR AND YOU:
PARTNERING FOR HEALTH



NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH STRATEGY MUST BE PROPERLY RESOURCED

AMA FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK, 21-27 July 2019

Your Family Doctor and You: Partnering for Health

The Australian Government must commit adequate resources to its proposed long-term national preventive health strategy, and work with GPs to help improve the health of all Australians.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, who will today address the National Press Club as part of Family Doctor Week, said the AMA is looking forward to working on the strategy, which Health Minister, Greg Hunt, first announced in a video message to the AMA National Conference in May.

“Preventive health measures reduce the rate of chronic ill health and improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians, leading to better and healthier lives,” Dr Bartone said.

“As a nation, we spend woefully too little on preventive health – around two per cent of the overall health budget.

“A properly resourced preventive health strategy, including national public education campaigns on issues such as smoking and obesity, is vital to helping Australians improve their lifestyles and quality of life.

“Family doctors – GPs – are best placed to manage preventive health, and can assist their patients in managing issues such as weight, alcohol consumption, physical activity, stress, substance use, and quitting smoking.

“Managing weight is a vital part of preventive health. Carrying excess weight contributes to cancers, high blood pressure, and musculoskeletal disorders like bad backs and neck pain. It also affects general health and wellbeing.

“Too many Australians drink at harmful levels, and this is dangerous to their health. Drinking in moderation, and within the guidelines, is a message all Australians should be aware of, and if you are worried about alcohol consumption, talk to your GP.

“Tobacco kills. There is no way to sugar coat the dangers of smoking. If you smoke, you increase your risk of coronary heart disease and cancer.

“Smoking can cause cancer of the lung, oesophagus, mouth, throat, kidney, bladder, liver, pancreas, stomach, cervix, colon, and rectum.

“If you want to quit smoking, start by seeing your family doctor.”

Dr Bartone will today announce the recipient of the 2019 *Dirty Ashtray Award*, which is presented to the government – Federal, State, or Territory – that has done the least over the past year to combat smoking.

AMA Family Doctor Week runs from 21 to 27 July 2019.

Background

- In 2017-18, two-thirds of Australian adults and almost one-quarter of Australian children were overweight or obese.
- Coronary heart disease is the nation's leading single cause of death.
- It is estimated that more than 1.2 million Australians have diabetes. The majority (85 per cent) have type 2 diabetes, which is largely preventable.
- In 2013, diabetes contributed to 10 per cent of all deaths in Australia.
- Tobacco is the leading cause of cancer in Australia.
- In 2014-15, more than 1.6 million Australian males aged 15 years and over smoked, 90 per cent of whom smoked daily.
- More than 1.2 million Australian females aged 15 years and over smoked, 91 per cent of whom smoked daily.
- About one in 10 mothers smoked in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy.
- In 2016, 57 per cent of daily smokers were aged over 40, and 20 per cent of daily smokers lived in remote and very remote areas of Australia.
- Daily tobacco smoking has been trending downward since 1991, from 24 per cent to 12 per cent in 2016.
- The proportion of people choosing never to take up smoking has increased to 62 per cent in 2016, from 51 per cent in 2001.
- In 2016, almost one in three (31 per cent) current smokers aged 14 and over have used e-cigarettes.
- Of current smokers in secondary school aged 16-17, more than one-quarter (26 per cent) smoked daily.

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics' National Health Survey, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Heart Foundation.

Follow all the action on Twitter: #amafdw19 and the Family Doctor Week [website](#)

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