

MEDIA RELEASE



14 December 2011

Chief Minister visits multi-disciplinary general practice

Chief Minister and Minister for Health, Katy Gallagher, visited the Isabella Plains Medical Centre this morning to view new infrastructure funded through the GP Development Fund. The Fund provides grants for projects that support, develop, attract and retain the General Practice workforce.

ACT Medicare Local Chair, Dr Rashmi Sharma says support from the ACT Government is critical in addressing workforce capacity issues. She said the funding has contributed towards a treatment room, three consulting rooms and a teaching room at her Isabella Plains practice.

“The funding has allowed us to expand our multi-disciplinary team. At my practice GPs work with an interdependent and co-operative multidisciplinary team. It works extremely well,” said Dr Sharma.

“The continuum of patient-centric care is our primary focus. We support nurses in primary health care and today showed the Chief Minister how effective a collaborative care model is within general practice,” said Dr Sharma.

The Chief Minister had an opportunity to see first-hand the multi-disciplinary team in action.

“Walking around the practice this morning I saw GPs, interns, GP registrars (training to be GPs), a number of nurses, a psychologist and a sports medicine practitioner working side-by-side to treat patients in the practice,” the Chief Minister said.

“It is great to see what the funding can achieve on the ground. Evidence shows that a strong primary health care system with GPs as the cornerstone provides excellent health outcomes,” the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister acknowledged the importance of training GPs in Canberra.

“It’s become increasingly apparent today that if we are able to train more GPs in Canberra, they are more likely to stay here and that will help address the GP shortage,” the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister also presented Canberran Leila Cheavin with a gift to acknowledge her tireless work in sewing over 10,000 dresses and hundreds of jumpers for underprivileged children in India. Many patients from the Isabella Plains practice regularly donate cloth and wool so Leila and her dedicated sewing group can make treasured clothing items.

“Leila is the personification of industriousness and kindness. Rashmi has encouraged her practice to become a charitable hub to receive the donations which Leila and her group brilliantly transform so she can personally deliver these much-needed dresses and jumpers to the kids in India,” the Chief Minister said.

During the visit, the Chief Minister also released the ACT Primary Health Care Strategy 2011-14. The Strategy builds on the work of the 2006-09 strategy and sets the strategic direction for primary health care into the future. The Strategy is available on the ACT Health Directorate website www.health.act.gov.au/policiesandplans



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