



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Media release

For immediate release

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Raising cultural awareness for GPs and practice teams

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has received funding from the Department of Health and Ageing to support cultural awareness orientation for its members and general practice teams. This funding is provided as part of the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) Indigenous Health Incentive.

The RACGP National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health will use the funding to assist general practices to participate in the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive and to provide more culturally appropriate and effective healthcare services to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, especially through initiatives of the 'Close The Gap' campaign.

The College is developing an online orientation activity through its *gplearning* platform, which will satisfy the requirements of the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive. The PIP Indigenous Health Incentive requires at least two members of the practice (one of whom must be a GP) to undertake cultural awareness education within 12 months of joining the incentive. The online activity will be available free of charge to RACGP members and general practice teams and will be launched at GP10 – the RACGP's annual conference – in October this year.

To support practices in their efforts to become more culturally responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, the College is also developing criteria for the accreditation of cultural awareness and cultural safety training programs offered by external training providers. The criteria will be used in addition to the existing QA&CPD criteria when adjudicating applications from training providers. It is anticipated that the criteria and adjudication process will be finalised by September.

Dr Brad Murphy, Chair of the RACGP National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, welcomed the funding and the introduction of the cultural awareness education requirement of the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive.

"Cultural awareness is crucial to the way GPs communicate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. We want all patients to feel comfortable when they enter a general practice or health service, encounter staff and access services.

"The RACGP's new online activity will provide the education gateway to the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive and will help participants learn more about the history and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The College will also encourage its members to participate in additional cultural safety training so that they can work towards providing culturally appropriate, as well as clinically sound, services to their patients.

"Understanding culture is a dynamic process and certainly is not a 'one size fits all' notion. We hope that the cultural awareness orientation offered through the RACGP will encourage practices to engage with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and build upon the concepts highlighted in our Indigenous Practice Incentive Payment education to enhance local health outcomes," Dr Murphy said.

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Media contacts

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About the RACGP

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is Australia's largest professional general practice organisation and represents urban and rural general practitioners. We represent over 21,000 members working in general practice and are proud that over 17,000 general practitioners in Australia have chosen to be a member of the College. General practitioners in Australia provide over 115 million patient consultations annually. Visit www.racgp.org.au.