



19 May 2009

State Government Assists Local GPs to Extend Hours

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton welcomed news that the Liberal-National Government will spend \$8.4million over the next three years to encourage General Practitioners (GPs) across the State to extend their opening hours to include weeknights and weekends.

Dr Nahan said the new Grants to After Hours General Practice Program would ensure that as many people as possible could access GP services when in need.

"Under the scheme, General Practices would be offered up to \$100,000 per year for providing weekday services from 8pm to midnight and up to \$200,000 per year to provide services from midnight until dawn," said Dr Nahan.

"Most people in the community have encountered difficulties getting in to see their local GP and in some cases, they are waiting days for the next available appointment. This new scheme will help to reduce those delays by opening up alternative times when appointments can be made."

"I urge all local GPs to consider participating in this important program, which will help make it viable for GPs to offer the extended service to the local community."

Dr Nahan said increasing access to GPs was a critical step in providing the community with the best possible health care and would help ease the pressure on the public health system.

"Primary care patients who do not necessarily require in-hospital treatment consistently make up 44 per cent of all the emergency department (ED) presentations and that rate is growing at about six per cent each year," said Dr Nahan.

"In recognizing that the demand for assistance at EDs is continuing to grow, a different approach had to be taken to after-hours access to care."

"General Practices will be asked to apply for the subsidies, which will be awarded on merit and the scheme will complement existing GP after-hours clinics that are co-located with hospitals," said Dr Nahan.

"I urge GPs to consider participating in this important program, which will help make it viable for GPs to offer an extended service to the people of WA."

The Health Department will advertise expressions of interest for the after-hours program from Wednesday, May 20 and up to 20 grants are available. Applications close on Wednesday, June 17 and GPs seeking more information should contact Health Networks on 9489 2800.

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