



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

Media release

27 March 2015

A ‘fit note’ not a ‘sick note’ is the key to good health in the workplace

Replacing the traditional ‘sick note’ with a ‘fit note’ is the way forward for ensuring a healthy and productive workplace in New Zealand, according to UK Government Expert Adviser on Health and Work, Professor Dame Carol Black.

The traditional ‘sickie’ is causing more harm than good for the overall health of workers and in New Zealand, workers take a staggering 6.1 million sick days each year¹.

Professor Dame Carol will address an audience of physicians in Wellington this week on the topic of [Health Benefits of Work](#).

“The traditional ‘sick note’ from a GP doesn’t give the full picture of an injured or ill worker’s health, leading to misperceptions regarding their capacity to return to work,” she said.

“GP’s should be given the option to nominate patients for a phased return to work, different hours, a get well program or changes to the workplace environment.

Professor Dame Carol was responsible for successfully introducing the ‘fit note’ system into the UK five years ago.

The President OF AFOEM, Dr David Beaumont, says the fit note will help both employers and their staff.

“With nearly 500,000 medical certificates issued each year, many of which just stating ‘Unfit for work for X period of time’ employers have no easy way to manage absence and no clear lines of communication with GPs. The Fit Note provides the way to achieve that and encourages exchange of information”.

The event, hosted by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP), will feature Professor Dame Carol and also the President of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners, Dr Tim Malloy.

Event details

Date: Wednesday, 1 April 2015

Time: 9am to 12pm

Location: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Cable Street, Wellington

¹ Wellness in the Workplace survey summary report

Ends

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