

## Media Release

### New Hepatitis C elimination targets

30 May 2016

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) welcomes the new global Hepatitis C elimination targets set at the World Health Organisation on Saturday at the sixty-ninth World Health Assembly in Geneva.

Targets include an 80 per cent reduction in Hepatitis C infections, and a 65 per cent reduction in hepatitis related deaths by 2030.

“This is the first global strategy to be released by the World Health Organisation to fight viral hepatitis,” said President Dr Catherine Yelland.

“Globally, 1.4 million people die each year from viral hepatitis, with a further six to ten million new cases of hepatitis each year.

“Hepatitis is a global public health threat, comparable to other major communicable diseases including, HIV and malaria, yet it has often been ignored as a global health priority.

“These new elimination targets are a good step forward however, it’s vital that today’s targets are fully supported by Government, if we are to eliminate viral hepatitis as a major public health threat by 2030,” said Dr Yelland.

The report also focuses on the need for increased childhood vaccine coverage, safe injections, and greater prevention measures for mother-to-child hepatitis transmissions.

From the first of March 2016, the Australian Government made a number of new and more advanced Hepatitis C medications publically available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

“Making these new drugs publically available on the PBS provides the opportunity for the elimination of Hepatitis C as a major public health problem in Australia.

“Everyone in the world living with viral hepatitis also deserves access to safe, affordable and effective care and treatment.”

**Ends**

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**About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP):** The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 15,000 physicians and 7,500 trainee physicians across Australia and New Zealand.

The College represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine, geriatric medicine and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patients.

The College offers 60 training pathways. These lead to the award of one of seven qualifications that align with 45 specialist titles recognised by the Medical Board of Australia or allow for registration in nine vocational scopes with the Medical Council of New Zealand.