

MEDIA RELEASE

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Local practice receives the mark of quality as an accredited practice

The remote Central Australian Utopia Homelands increased its community health credentials today when Urapuntja Health Service received a national award of accreditation, demonstrating its commitment to quality and safety within its practice.

Urapuntja Health Service received this important recognition from Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited (AGPAL), the leading not-for-profit provider of general practice accreditation services within Australia.

AGPAL Chair Dr Richard Choong said accreditation shows the practice makes a significant investment and commitment to quality on a day-to-day basis, across all levels of the practice team.

"Achieving accreditation is a major achievement for any practice and a clear demonstration that Urapuntja Health Service is striving to improve their level of care to both patients and the community," he said.

"Practices seek accreditation because they want to do their best and view this as another step towards excellence in patient care."

To achieve accreditation, a practice team works over a 12 month period to implement the *Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Standards for general practices*, (the recognised national standard), which provides a template for quality care and risk management.

The AGPAL accreditation program was developed to provide a range of minimum expectations for patients surrounding safety and care by assessing the practice environment and their processes. Accreditation was developed jointly by AGPAL and primary health organisations and peak bodies, including the Australian Medical Association (AMA).

Areas of focus during an on-site assessment for accreditation include: ensuring vaccines are within their use-by-date and stored at the correct temperatures; that the practice equipment is clean and sterile; practice staff are up-to-date with their training; and the practice has emergency care available.

Dr Choong said accreditation is attainable only through cooperation and communication between staff members.

"Everyone at the practice plays a valuable role in working to meet the RACGP Standards. It gives staff a real sense of pride to work in an accredited practice," added Dr Choong.

Urapuntja Health Service proudly displays the AGPAL symbol for all their patients to see.

Linda Keating, Urapuntja Health Service CEO said "We want community members to know that their wellbeing is our priority. By choosing to attend an accredited practice, patients know they will get quality and safe care that meets the RACGP Standards."

The practice is a not-for-profit, Community Controlled Aboriginal Health Service, located 270km North East of Alice Springs. The practice provides comprehensive primary health care and emergency medical services to the Eastern Anmatyarre and Alywarre people that are the traditional owners of the land. The service has a proud history of achieving accreditation with AGPAL.

AGPAL is the leading not-for-profit provider in general practice accreditation services; for further information on AGPAL please visit www.agpal.com.au or free call 1300 362 111.

For further information on Urapuntja Health Service please visit www.urapuntja.org.au or call 08 8956 9875

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

AGPAL accreditation evaluates the quality and safety of the practice environment, systems and processes and patient care for more than 75 per cent of general practices who choose to undergo accreditation.

General practice accreditation within Australia is a voluntary process.

To earn accreditation, practices must have an extensive on-site review by a team of AGPAL GP surveyors and Co-surveyors.

The purpose of the review is to evaluate the practice against standards set by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). To be awarded accreditation the practice must demonstrate how they meet all the standards and criteria set by the RACGP.

Achieving accreditation covers :

- The safe and lawful use of practice equipment;
- Accessibility and availability of medical care including after-hours and emergency care;
- Staff training;
- Information technology and information security;
- The security and availability of your records and information.

AGPAL is an independent, not-for-profit organisation, governed by a board that includes general practitioners, practice managers and consumer representatives from around Australia. AGPAL assesses practices against Standards set by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

Urapuntja Health Service provides services to a population of about 1000 permanent residents who live in 16 homeland communities. We are a unique, in that we deliver an outreach service to all 16 outstation communities every week. Urapuntja Health Service has been delivering core primary health care services to the community since 1977. The authority of the health board and community members determine how the service works and to this day the health status of our people in Utopia are some of the best in the Northern Territory.

Community involvement has been critical to everything that we do and confirms for clients that our service is a safe place where the experience of Aboriginality is understood and where special needs are recognised and supported.

Urapuntja Health Service also recently received the Northern Territory Administrators Medal in Primary Health Care – recognising excellence in Primary Health Care.

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