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### **Healthcare agreements should fund clinical training: Medical Deans**

Support for the clinical training of medical students should be made explicit in the Australian Healthcare agreements to be discussed tomorrow by Australia's health ministers, the body representing Australia's medical deans has advised.

The Chair of Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand, Professor Allan Carmichael, said increased numbers of trainee doctors would be moving through the system in the next five years and adequate resourcing of their training would be required.

"Support for clinical training places should be made explicit in the healthcare agreements between the Commonwealth, the states and the territories," Professor Carmichael said.

"At the moment that training is not included in the healthcare agreements but it is really a fundamental requirement if we want to have an adequately trained medical workforce."

The health ministers are meeting in Sydney tomorrow to negotiate a new five year funding agreement for public hospitals and healthcare. The current agreement expires in June.

At the 2006 Council of Australian Governments meeting the states and territories agreed to provide high-quality clinical placements and intern training for Commonwealth-funded medical and nursing students.

"We now need that commitment to be translated into concrete action," Professor Carmichael said.

"The Commonwealth and the states and territories need to take joint responsibility for funding clinical training or the real benefits of having more trainee doctors in the system will be lost because their training will not be adequately supported."

Professor Carmichael said the healthcare agreements, which traditionally apply to hospitals, should be explicit in funding increased numbers of hospital staff who can supervise student training. He said the funding should also cover infrastructure such as physical space in which to accommodate the students and IT support.

However, as well as resourcing hospitals, the healthcare agreements should also incorporate community support for doctor training so general practitioners who are interested in supervising trainee doctors have the means to do so, Professor Carmichael said.

"One of the problems at the moment is that there are GPs who are willing to take students but they only have their own consulting space, there's no space to put a student or a trainee doctor," Professor Carmichael said.

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