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HEALTHY KIDS' CHECKS MUST BE PROVIDED IN GENERAL PRACTICE

AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce, said today that the Government must reject calls for independent nurses to be allowed to carry out 'healthy kids' checks in Child and Maternal Health Centres.

Dr Pesce said the health of our children is far too important to allow these health checks to be 'dumbed down'.

“General practitioners and their practice nurses, in close collaboration, are the appropriate people to be conducting these health checks, and they are conducting them diligently and skilfully,” Dr Pesce said.

“To properly monitor a child's health, the doctor has knowledge of the child's family, the child's living environment, and the child's health history, including any known risk factors.

“This comprehensive knowledge of the child is not available to independent nurses who seek to conduct one-off child health checks in Child and Maternal Health Centres, as proposed by the Australian Nursing Federation.

“Allowing people other than doctors to perform 'healthy kids' checks independent of doctors would further fragment health care and would erode the quality and safety of child health care,” Dr Pesce said.

Dr Pesce said the slow uptake of 'healthy kids' checks by the community has nothing to do with the workload of GPs and everything to do with the poor design of the Healthy Kids Check item.

“The item should better reflect the comprehensive specialised service provided by doctors,” Dr Pesce said.

“If the Healthy Kids Check were evidence-based and better targetted at children at a younger age in accordance with clinical indications, then the uptake would most likely improve.

“The AMA urges the Government to consult with the medical profession to redesign the Healthy Kids Check item to ensure this initiative delivers the best possible health outcomes to our children,” Dr Pesce said.

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