

## Millions to benefit from Australian first pain management solution

General Practitioners (GPs) are now better equipped to manage the acute and chronic pain suffered by over 3.2 million Australians, following the release of a unique Australian-first multidisciplinary developed pain management program.

The pain management 'Active Learning Module' (ALM) is the culmination of a successful collaboration between the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), the Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM) of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), and the Bupa Health Foundation (BHF).

Launching at RACGP's National Conference, 'GP12', the ALM, an accredited online learning program gives primary healthcare professionals immediate access to the latest evidence-based research and skills to help prevent transition from acute to chronic pain and improve the quality of life and health for patients suffering from pain.

The RACGP accredited online learning program provides primary healthcare professionals with access to the latest evidence-based research and practical skills to deliver effective pain management to their patients.

Alarming statistics show that up to 80% of people living with chronic pain are missing out on treatment that could improve their health and quality of life<sup>1</sup>. It is also estimated that by 2050, the number of Australians living with chronic pain will grow to 5 million.

Managing pain is complex and this tool draws upon insights across pain medicine, anaesthesia, psychiatry, general medicine, general practice, surgery and physiotherapy.

FPM Dean, Associate Professor Brendan Moore said, "The current fragmented approach to pain management is one of the greatest challenges facing those treating chronic pain. This new program will ensure healthcare providers have access to the best available evidence in cross-practice pain management, resulting in better outcomes for patients."

"By focusing on the importance of early treatment, GPs are in an ideal position to help prevent those patients experiencing acute pain, from ending up suffering a chronic condition."

RACGP President, Dr Liz Marles said, "Merging the high educational standards and technological capabilities of the RACGP, with the clinical expertise of the Faculty of Pain Medicine, allowed us to develop a practical tool that addresses the needs of GPs and other primary healthcare practitioners providing pain management services in our communities."

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<sup>1</sup> Access Economics. *The high price of pain: the economic impact of persistent pain in Australia*. Nov 2007.

“The new ALM provides a great opportunity for GPs interested in furthering their education on the diagnosis and management of acute and chronic pain, to easily access and undertake this engaging and relevant new module,” Dr Marles said.

Dr Paul Bates, Bupa Health Foundation Steering Committee member said, “This partnership furthers the long standing commitment of the Bupa Health Foundation as an advocate for effective pain management.

“The Bupa Health Foundation’s study, *‘The High Price of Pain - The Economic Impact of Persistent Pain in Australia’* determined the true economic cost of persistent pain in Australia.”

“Following on from this landmark study, the Foundation supported the 2008 National Pain Summit to tackle the critical issue of pain and identify priority actions to ease suffering, save important healthcare dollars and help patients get on with a productive life.”

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### **About the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)**

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is Australia’s largest professional general practice organisation and represents urban and rural general practitioners. We represent over 21,500 members working in or towards a career in general practice and are proud that over 19,300 Australian-registered general practitioners have chosen to be a member of the College. There are over 125 million general practice consultations taking place annually in Australia. Visit [www.racgp.org.au](http://www.racgp.org.au).

### **About the Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM) of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists**

The Faculty of Pain Medicine of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists delivers a world-class, multidisciplinary training program for specialist pain medicine physicians in Australia and New Zealand. It was formed in 1998 and has over 300 Fellows.  
[www.fpm.anzca.edu.au](http://www.fpm.anzca.edu.au)

### **About the Bupa Health Foundation**

Bupa Health Foundation helps build a healthier Australian community through its support of important health research, health education and other healthy living programs. Established as a charitable foundation in 2005, Bupa Health Foundation has partnered in more than 80 initiatives nationally, with a combined investment of around \$19 million, across its key focus areas: wellbeing, managing chronic disease, healthy ageing, empowering people about their health; and promoting affordable healthcare. [www.bupa.com.au/foundation](http://www.bupa.com.au/foundation).

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