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Private sector to play increased role in junior doctor training

St John of God Health Care welcomed the Commonwealth and State Governments' commitment to medical training, following today's announcement of funding for 40 new internship places in Western Australia from 2013, 32 of which will be in private hospitals.

Federal Health Minister Tanya Plibersek and State Health Minister Dr Kim Hames confirmed the initiative would tackle the projected shortage of intern positions and assure the longer term supply of trained doctors.

St John of God Health Care's Group Chief Executive Officer Dr Michael Stanford said there was a clear need for the private sector to complement the traditional public teaching hospital model in order to guarantee the future medical workforce.

"A national shortage of doctors, combined with our rapidly ageing population, makes planning for the future critical. We are committed to teaching and training of junior doctors and look forward to further discussions on how we can contribute to this exciting new initiative."

St John of God Health Care has already made medical education and training a priority. It has 64 junior medical officers set to train at its hospitals in 2013, 40 of whom will be funded by the Commonwealth Government's Specialist Training Program, and will soon start a new medical and surgical program for doctors in training at its Subiaco Hospital.

It also works closely with nine university medical schools in Western Australia and Victoria to provide education for close to 600 medical students each year rotating through its hospitals and pathology laboratories.

The Commonwealth Government is funding the 32 internships for private hospitals and the eight places for public hospitals are being funded by the State Government.

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About St John of God Health Care

St John of God Health Care is a Catholic, not-for-profit health care group operating 13 private hospitals (2,042 beds), 7 in regional areas, in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, where it has two more under development. The organisation reinvests profits in improving the health of Australians by increasing facilities and services, investing in technology and providing a range of health services – at no or minimal cost – to people experiencing disadvantage. For more information, visit www.sjog.org.au