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**AMA calls on TGA to stop publishing details of misleading smoking cessation services**

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has called on the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to stop immediately publishing details of “pop-up” online services that are misrepresenting themselves as smoking cessation services.

AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid has written to the TGA to express his deep concern that it has published a list of authorised prescribers of nicotine vaping products, some of which “masquerade” as smoking cessation services when in fact they do nothing more than provide easy access to nicotine vaping products.

He said that the sites appeared to have the sole purpose of generating a prescription for a nicotine vaping product and promote vaping as a first-line smoking cessation therapy despite it being officially recommended to be used only as a last resort.

“Although the TGA’s list is not intended to suggest endorsement, the mere inclusion of these online services gives them a much higher status than they deserve and means that the TGA is inadvertently directing patients to websites that provide misleading information around the quality, safety and efficacy of nicotine vaping products,” Dr Khorshid said.

“I urge the TGA to reconsider publishing the details of authorised prescribers of nicotine vaping products so that the TGA can be fully satisfied that they offer genuine smoking cessation services in accordance with Royal Australian College of General Practitioners’ guidelines.

“As an immediate step, the TGA should remove any listing that offers online only services.”

Dr Khorshid said he was concerned that the proliferation of pop-up websites, some of which appeared to have the sole purpose of generating a prescription for a nicotine vaping product, were contrary to the aims of the Government’s vaping reforms.

New laws introduced on October 1 closed a loophole in federal legislation that enabled the unregulated importation and illegal sale of nicotine vaping products or “e-cigarettes” in states and territories.

Under the new rules, nicotine containing vaping products can only be accessed via a prescription from a doctor and are aimed at protecting the non-smoking public, especially young people and children, from the clear harms of nicotine poisoning and addiction.

“Vaping is not a risk-free version of smoking that some would have us believe. It is addictive, is associated with proven harms and we know that if nicotine gets into the hands of young children and is ingested, it is highly toxic and can be fatal in small amounts,” Dr Khorshid said.

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