



AMA CALLS FOR RELEASE OF REVIEW INTO COSMETIC SURGERY

The AMA said it hoped the imminent release of an independent review of the regulation of health practitioners in cosmetic surgery would deliver clear recommendations for changes needed to address growing concerns over patient safety.

The AMA also called on health ministers to take decisive action to address longstanding concerns over the use of the title ‘surgeon’.

An independent panel conducting the review was established by the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency (Ahpra) in January following concerning reports about the practices and outcomes of some providers of cosmetic surgery, including their methods of promotion.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said recent media coverage had again drawn attention to the need for urgent action to be taken by the regulators of cosmetic surgery.

Professor Robson also said health ministers had been dragging their feet and must move to restrict the use of the title ‘surgeon’ to only medical practitioners properly trained and accredited.

“The report from an independent review into regulation of health practitioners in cosmetic surgery is due to have been completed this month and we will be meeting with the MBA very soon to discuss its findings,” Professor Robson said.

“The AMA provided a submission to this review and called for a regulatory approach which provides certainty to patients and practitioners, including an exploration of the requirement for an endorsement in cosmetic surgery to be added to the registration of medical practitioners who undertake cosmetic surgery, and who are not plastic surgeons.

“We also called for better collection of data and information about cosmetic surgery in Australia to inform policy, regulation and research.”

Professor Robson said in a separate process, state and territory health ministers had been reviewing who could use the title “surgeon” under the National Law.

“For many years, the AMA has expressed concern that patients may be misled by the term ‘cosmetic surgeon’ or ‘podiatric surgeon,’ believing they are dealing with a medical practitioner who has formal and specific surgical qualifications, when in fact they may not.

“The AMA supports restricting the use of the title ‘surgeon’ to those medical practitioners who have undertaken a significant surgical training program provided by an Australian Medical Council accredited education provider.”

Professor Robson said health ministers also needed to rethink flawed legislative changes to registration requirements currently before the Queensland Parliament, which included allowing practitioners to use testimonials.

“The AMA is concerned this will lead to an explosion in false testimonials on social media sites which will go unchallenged – particularly where Ahpra has shown it already has difficulty enforcing existing provisions relating to false and misleading advertising,” Professor Robson said.

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