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AMA MEDIA STATEMENT

The AMA is extraordinarily disappointed at the allegations today in the media suggesting that up to \$8b is being defrauded each year from Medicare by health professionals including doctors.

These claims are an unjustified slur on the medical profession, with the vast majority of doctors doing the right thing by their patients and by Medicare rules.

Our health system is built around universal access to health care that Medicare supports, and the AMA supports effective stewardship of this Medicare funding.

The AMA has worked with the Government to ensure that Medicare requirements are clearer for doctors and supported initiatives to ensure that the Department of Health has effective tools to police and detect fraud.

The AMA meets regularly with the Department of Health, which has sophisticated analytical tools, and understands that there is no evidence of the widespread fraud suggested in today's media.

The Department of Health has extensive data at its disposal and the AMA believes that this should guide Medicare compliance activities as opposed to the anecdotal evidence of a small number of individuals.

Where evidence of fraud is found, the AMA fully supports efforts to stamp this out including referral to the Professional Services Review when required.

Quotes attributable to Professor Steve Robson:

"Australia's doctors have worked incredibly hard through COVID – treating Australians during lockdown, rolling out the nation's vaccine efforts, putting themselves at risk every day to treat COVID patients on the front line – so today's coverage is as appalling as it is inaccurate.

"Doctors will be sickened by today's reporting which is an undeserved attack on the whole profession based very much on anecdotes and individual cases.

"The vast majority of doctors do the right thing, and are working hard for their patients under tremendous pressure within the system.

"The AMA works closely with the Department of Health on compliance and we have never seen any concerns or numbers that would support the figures reported today.

"We do not tolerate fraud and examples of fraud should be tackled and stamped out - but the figures reported today are grossly inflated.

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