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**‘Robust’ online campaign needed to counter health misinformation says AMA**

The AMA has called on the Australian Government to counter health misinformation through targeted online advertising campaigns.

In its submission to the National Health Literacy Strategy consultation the AMA says medical misinformation must be addressed.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said the COVID-19 pandemic had seen widespread disinformation on a massive scale and with consequences not thought possible in Australia previously.

“As we face another Covid wave coming into Christmas it is really important for the public to listen to their GPs and the public health advice,” Professor Robson said.

“Mask-up when you are unable to socially distance and if you aren’t up to date with your COVID-19 vaccination, please make a booking to get your booster. While being up to date with your vaccination may not stop you getting Covid, it will greatly reduce your chances of more serious illness or hospitalisation.

“We all have Covid fatigue, but Covid is not yet tired of us, it is a deadly virus which is still causing too many deaths in Australia each week”.

Professor Robson said it was important for the strategy to acknowledge the role of media, especially digital media in the communication of accurate information

He said the AMA had made a number of recommendations to the National Health Literacy Strategy regarding medical misinformation including:

- That the Australian Government invest in long-term, robust online advertising to counter health misinformation, including on social media channels.
- That the Australian Government collaborates with all state and territory governments to extend the current ‘Health Direct’ website to provide a single accessible national source of verified health information.
- Social media companies actively acknowledge their public health responsibility and work to counter health misinformation on their platforms.
- Medical Colleges and employers in the health sector support doctors to implement evidence-based communication techniques to improve health literacy in their patients. This should include time and funding for professional development and training in health literacy
- State and territory health departments acknowledge the importance of health literacy at a high level and take practical actions within their health services to improve it. This should include the provision of accessible health information, easily navigable design of public health facilities, and dissemination of education and health promotion campaigns.

Read the AMA submission [here](#).

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