

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Experiments with scope of practice are a slippery slope

Workforce ‘experiments’ being conducted in some states and territories put Australia on a slippery slope towards a more costly and fragmented health system and poorer outcomes for patients.

In the submission to a Department of Health and Aged Care [review on scope of practice](#), the Australian Medical Association said any reform must focus on collaboration.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said Australia has — by world standards — a very good health system and the last thing the system needs are band aid solutions that will result in worse health outcomes for Australians.

“Governments have an opportunity to build on the recommendations of the strengthening Medicare taskforce report and develop collaborative, patient-centred models of care,” Professor Robson said.

“What we don’t want to see is more health professions trying to carve out independent roles, which inevitably results in more fragmented care, waste and higher long term health system costs.”

“We need to build on the strengths of our health care system, recognising the skills that different health care professions bring to the care of a patient. At the same time, we need to ensure any care takes place in a well-coordinated model that is guided by a doctor’s medical diagnosis.”

Professor Robson said innovation was already taking place in general practice with nursing and allied health professionals working alongside GPs as part of well-coordinated and collaborative teams.

“That’s the type of reform the AMA will be looking for in this scope of practice review — patient-centred, GP-led teamwork — not just a rearranging of the deck chairs at the cost of quality patient care,” Professor Robson said.

The submission also highlights that while there are many robust processes in place to allow health professions to expand their scope, they are being ignored by state ministers. These decisions bypass the processes of the Health Professions Prescribing Pathway and undermine the role of the Therapeutic Goods Administration, Australia’s world-leading medicines regulator.

“We need to see consistency across states and a commitment to the agreed-upon pathways. We don’t want to see more examples of industry lobby groups deciding their own National Board’s position on the scope of a profession is not to their liking and working with the states to undermine that,” Professor Robson said.

[Read the AMA’s submission](#)

Read about the [Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce — Scope of Practice Review](#)

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