

MEDIA RELEASE

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Closer look at medicinal cannabis prescribing welcome, but just one part of the puzzle

AMA Queensland has welcomed moves by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and the National Boards to strengthen guidelines around the prescribing of medicinal cannabis.

President Dr Nick Yim said there was a concern the industry was putting profits over patient safety.

"Medicinal cannabis can be an effective treatment for a limited number of conditions and for patients without other complex conditions, but it can come with significant risks," he said.

"Doctors have reported an increase in the number of patients with no previous history of mental illness presenting to our EDs with psychosis after using these substances.

"We are pleased to see Ahpra and the National Boards putting the industry on notice."

Dr Yim said watching prescription rates was only one part of the puzzle, with focus also needed on unscrupulous vested business interests who may be driving higher rates of prescribing.

This includes instant online prescribing models and delivery services that provide rapid access to medicinal cannabis products, sometimes containing unnecessary yet extremely potent concentrations of THC.

"We – along with our colleagues at the RACGP, RANZCP and the Pharmacy Guild – have previously written to and met with the Therapeutic Goods Administration to raise our concerns and advocate for improved regulatory controls and standards for these products," Dr Yim said.

"Those discussions affirmed our concerns – that regulatory agencies are aware of the issue and are trying to address it, but their ability to do so is being severely limited by complex federal-state legislative arrangements.

"We continue to call on the state government to work swiftly with its federal counterparts to improve regulation."

AMA Queensland urges Queenslanders seeking information about medicinal cannabis to consult their regular and trusted GP to discuss potential harms associated with taking medicinal cannabis.

Medicinal cannabis is often prescribed for conditions for which it isn't indicated and there are usually safer, cheaper and more effective alternatives. Appropriate diagnosis and prescribing as well as ongoing supervision by your GP are the best ways to ensure safe and effective use of the product.

Background:

- AMA Queensland, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Pharmacy Guild, Queensland wrote to the Therapeutic Goods Administration raising concerns about medicinal cannabis several times between November 2024 and March 2025.
- The correspondence is available [here on our website](#).