



Abuse against healthcare workers hurts everyone

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The Australian Medical Association in South Australia (AMA SA) is warning that violence and abuse against frontline healthcare workers are harming the entire health system — and ultimately, patients.

AMA SA President Associate Professor Peter Subramaniam says aggressive behaviour is driving away essential staff, worsening workforce shortages that underpin ambulance ramping and longer surgery waiting times.

‘Abuse should never be part of the job,’ A/Prof Subramaniam says. ‘Doctors, nurses, paramedics, allied health professionals and admin staff work tirelessly — often under immense pressure — to keep our communities healthy. It’s unacceptable that they’re being subjected to violence, threats and abuse at such high rates.’

‘This behaviour not only puts individuals at immediate risk but also fuels burnout — a key factor in highly trained, experienced healthcare staff leaving the profession.’

AMA SA’s latest Hospital Health Check, which reports on working conditions for junior doctors across South Australia’s major hospitals, highlights how burnout is undermining efforts to train and retain the next generation of medical professionals.

According to the report, 17% of junior doctors in South Australia — that’s almost 1 in 5 — said they were considering a future outside of medicine.

‘We’re losing the very people our health system depends on,’ A/Prof Subramaniam says.

‘It takes years to train a doctor, and when burnout drives them out, it’s not just a loss of expertise — it’s a direct threat to patient care. Abuse against healthcare workers hurts everyone.’

‘AMA SA fully supports the “Respectful Behaviours” campaign and stands shoulder-to-shoulder with our frontline teams.’

‘We’re urging the community to show their solidarity too, by being respectful and patient. The safety and wellbeing of doctors, nurses, paramedics and administrative support staff is not negotiable.’

For interview requests please contact Media Manager Ben Terry on 0478 847 604.

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