



Healthcare convenience cannot come at the cost of patient safety

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AMA SA President Associate Professor Peter Subramaniam is urging caution as the South Australian Government continues to advance its policy to expand pharmacists' roles and responsibilities.

He says that despite additional training for pharmacists, diverting patients away from general practice could put them at risk.

'Expanding pharmacists' roles can offer greater convenience and faster access for some healthcare needs, but that convenience cannot come at the expense of patient care,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'If patients are treated for symptoms without the oversight of a doctor, there's a real danger that serious or complex conditions will be missed or inappropriately managed, and that follow-up care will be inconsistent.'

A/Prof Subramaniam says doctors, pharmacists, nurses and allied health professionals all play valued and complementary roles in the health system, but South Australians are best served when those professionals work together within their scope of expertise.

'Pharmacists play a vital role in healthcare, but they are not trained as doctors,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'GPs – like other specialists – can spend 12 years or more developing the clinical expertise needed to diagnose and manage complex medical conditions. That depth of clinical experience simply can't be matched in 12 months of additional training.'

'The health system is most effective when all professionals collaborate, recognising both the limitations and strengths of their roles for the benefit of patient outcomes.'

A/Prof Subramaniam says the decision to expand pharmacists' roles must come with additional safety checks.

'Any new models of care must include robust mechanisms for monitoring risks, clinical oversight, structured escalation protocols, and transparent evaluation,' he says.

'AMA SA is ready to work constructively with government and pharmacy representatives to design the safest, most effective models for expanded healthcare access.'

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

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