

Australian Medical Association Limited

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604

Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499

Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



AMA REJECTS PROPOSALS TO WATER DOWN ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR HEALTH PROFESSION TRAINING

The AMA has called Health Ministers to reject proposals that would water down the accreditation standards for health professionals, undermine patient safety, and involve more cost and bureaucracy.

AMA Vice President, Dr Tony Bartone, said that the proposals, made in the draft report of the *Review of Accreditation Systems within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme*, would allow more bureaucratic and political interference in health workforce training.

The draft report recommends establishing a new agency, the Health Education Accreditation Board, as a single, national, cross-profession accreditation framework for health workforce education and training, and establishing Accreditation Committees to develop standards for the Board to approve.

“Accreditation has a critical role in protecting the public by ensuring the highest standards of education and training are in place,” Dr Bartone said.

“Australia has a world class health system that delivers very good outcomes for patients. The results achieved are, in large measure, the product of a highly-skilled health workforce that is responsive to community need, and committed to innovation and continuous improvement.

“Independent, profession-led health workforce accreditation arrangements, where the safety of the public is paramount, are one of the strengths of the Australian health system.

“Patients should be very worried about the Review’s draft recommendations, which would water down our world-leading accreditation arrangements and are deliberately designed to allow Governments and employers to push their own workforce agendas at the expense of patient safety.

“Imposing a one-size-fits-all approach to accreditation, including abolishing existing profession-led accreditation councils, does not reflect the reality of health workforce training or the context in which it is delivered.

“Instead, it will undermine the confidence of both the public and the professions in accreditation arrangements.

“It is very concerning that the review wants to see greater control of medical education and training being given to people with no training or practice in medicine.

“Unfortunately, the Review fails to recognise the innovation and reform that is already happening within the health workforce, as well as the proven record of accreditation bodies in establishing frameworks that support high quality training and education.

“The Review ignores this reality, and many of its key recommendations simply look like an attempt to address unfinished business arising from the 2005 Productivity Commission *Review of Health Workforce*, which is not surprising given that the Independent Reviewer also led that work.

“A great deal has changed since 2005, including a significant expansion of the medical workforce and other health disciplines. We do not need to revisit concepts that were rejected more than a decade ago and are of even less relevance today.

“The clear intent of the Review’s draft report is to use accreditation to drive health workforce reform. This is a distraction from accreditation’s key function – to maintain standards and protect the public.

“Health workforce reform would be much better dealt with by establishing an independent entity that can properly evaluate both the current needs and the impact of potential changes to the health workforce.

“The introduction of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) in 2010 represented a very significant reform to the governance of health workforce accreditation arrangements.

“The Review has failed to make the case for major reforms to existing arrangements.

“The AMA believes it is too early in the life of NRAS to consider any significant reforms to the governance of accreditation. A more cautious approach is warranted, focusing on measured changes that build on and improve current systems and processes.”

The Review is due to deliver its final report to Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Ministers for consideration before the next Ministerial Council meeting in November.

The AMA’s submission to the draft report of the *Review of Accreditation Systems within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme* can be read in full at <https://ama.com.au/submission/ama-submission-independent-review-accreditation-within-national-registration-and-0>

16 October 2017

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

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