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VITAL ROLE OF GENERALIST DOCTORS MUST BE PROMOTED

AMA Position Statement on Fostering Generalism in the Medical Workforce

The AMA has released an updated *Position Statement on Fostering Generalism in the Medical Workforce*.

The Position Statement highlights the importance of rebuilding the generalist workforce in Australia. It recommends better training programs and career pathways, and greater recognition and support for the important work provided by generalists across the health system.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that generalist doctors play a vital role in the health system as clinicians, teachers, and researchers in all settings, from tertiary public hospitals to remote practices.

“Generalists are increasingly relied on to provide a significant amount of surgical, anaesthetic, and obstetric care in rural and remote communities due to poor access to sub-specialist services in those areas,” Dr Bartone said.

“They are also needed in all hospitals to serve the growing number of ageing Australians with multiple chronic and complex health conditions.

“We need to support and promote generalists.

“There has been some policy and resourcing put in place to encourage generalist medical careers, but the trend towards sub-specialisation has continued.

“Fewer medical graduates are choosing a generalist career path.

“The number of medical graduates has doubled since 2005 and we have an expanding medical workforce. This provides the perfect opportunity to address the relative shortages in generalist specialties.

“We need to introduce improved training models and pathways, better recognition and support, and appropriate remuneration for generalist doctors.

“Getting more generalists into the system will lead to improvements in safety and quality of care, and improved patient outcomes,” Dr Bartone said.

Key recommendations of the *AMA Position Statement on Fostering Generalism in the Medical Workforce* include:

- clearly defined training programs and pathways for generalists;
- the establishment of a general set of competencies for all doctors in training that will allow the medical workforce to meet community needs;
- enhanced training opportunities to enable the acquisition of specialty procedural skills for generalist doctors,
- greater recognition and support for generalists,
- more comparable remuneration for generalists, and
- further work to quantify and predict generalist workforce requirements and distribution as a matter of urgency.

The AMA will use the Position Statement to guide the development of the recently announced National Medical Workforce Strategy.

The *AMA Position Statement on Fostering Generalism in the Medical Workforce* is at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/position-statement-fostering-generalism-medical-workforce-2019>

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