

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/>



**GOVERNMENT’S JOBKEEPER SUPPORT PACKAGE WILL KEEP
 MEDICAL PRACTICES OPERATING**

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that the Government’s JobKeeper package, along with other measures announced over recent weeks to support small business, will allow many medical practices to continue to provide vital healthcare services and advice to the Australian community during the COVID-19 crisis.

Dr Bartone said that thousands of medical practices – general practices and other specialty practices – are not immune to the economic impact of COVID-19, just like every other small business in Australia.

“Medical practices are important members of every local community in Australia,” Dr Bartone said.

“But some have already had to consider laying off staff due to the significant changes to their operating environment.

“Without this kind of support, the viability of many others would suffer.

“All around the country, operations are being cancelled and patients are increasingly reluctant to visit their doctor for fear of catching COVID-19.

“While telehealth will be a tremendous help for doctors and patients alike, there are some medical conditions that can’t be dealt with over the phone or by a video call. Face to face traditional consultations are a key cornerstone of good medical practice.

“COVID 19 will not last forever, so we need to ensure that medical practices, like any other business, are ready to emerge on the other side of this crisis to continue delivering high quality patient care.

“The AMA will be strongly urging and advising medical practices that are struggling to look at the support options that are available to them.

“With \$1500 per eligible employee each fortnight now available, this will make a big difference to decisions about whether or not to keep staff.

“”The range of other financial support measures that have been introduced will help them deal with the economic challenge that COVID-19 presents.”

Dr Bartone said it is important that patients do not put off accessing medical care during this crisis.

“Evidence shows that worse outcomes have been shown to occur from the deferral of usual care,” Dr Bartone said.

“Medicare now funds many telehealth services and doctors are doing everything they can to ensure that the risks of transmission in their practices are minimised.

“Putting off essential medical care is not good for patients’ health, and may see existing conditions become much worse, potentially requiring more serious treatment or an unplanned trip to hospital.

“It is vital that we all support the business of keeping all Australians healthy,” Dr Bartone said.

The AMA has prepared a summary of financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government for the information of doctors and their practice managers, which is available at <https://ama.com.au/article/latest-information-covid-19#D9>

31 March 2020

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

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: http://twitter.com/ama_media

Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>

Follow *Australian Medicine* on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/amaausmed>

Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>