

Medical Board of Australia consultation on the funding of external doctors' health programs

Submission received from: **Name withheld**

Question 1: Is there a need for health programs?

Do you see any value in, or need for external health programs for medical students and/or doctors? Please explain your reasoning

Absolutely.

I have accessed the services of the VDHP and found it to be a huge benefit in finding a local counsellor, doctor and access to other services. It is hard to find doctors that are not already colleagues whom you can trust.

Question 2: Preferred model for external health programs

Of the existing models in Australia as described above, is there a model that you would prefer to see adopted nationally? Is there an alternative model that you would like to see adopted nationally?

VDHP with its long list of things it does.

Question 3: The role of the Board in funding external health programs

Do you believe that it is the role of the Board to fund external health programs?

The board of AHPRA have a duty of care to their staff and registered doctors to provide a workplace that is manageable. When that work place is stressful and things people must deal with are confronting, frustrating or upsetting, they should have a place to turn to that is fully aware of their predicament and can offer the best counselling to suit their needs. This is a duty of care that forwards on through to the patient under the care of that doctor.

Question 4: Range of services provided by doctors' health programs

What services should be provided by doctors' health programs. In addition to the ones you have selected, what other services (if any) should be provided by doctors' health programs?

Telephone advice during office hours

Referral to expert practitioners for assessment and management

Develop and maintain a list of practitioners who are willing to treat colleagues

Education services for medical practitioners and medical students to raise awareness of health issues for the medical profession and to encourage practitioners and students to have a general practitioner

Programs to enhance the skills of medical practitioners who assess and manage the health of doctors

Case management and monitoring (including workplace monitoring) the progress of those who voluntarily enter into Case Management agreements (or similar) with the service

Follow up of all participants contacting or attending the service

Assistance in finding support for re-entry to work and rehabilitation

Research on doctors' health issues

Publication of resources – maintaining a website, newsletters, journal articles

Question 5: Funding

How much of an increase in registration fees is acceptable to you, to fund doctors' health services?

\$25 - \$40

Question 6: Other comments

Do you have any other comments or feedback about external health programs?

I have trouble finding therapists that are not intimidated by the knowledge you may have.

I have trouble accessing groups to share troubling experiences with.

VDHP provided a group of people I could relate to and learn from without worry of disclosure to the general public.

Every time I saw a GP they would end up becoming part of the university staff and I found it hard to get my own GP in a rural setting.