

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

Submission received from: **Health Education and Training Institute (HETI)**
Dr Greg Keogh, A/Director of the Medical Directorate

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

Value and need.

It is important to have available access to Doctors Health Advisory Service. Separation of Impairment programs (Board responsibility) and health advisory services are important but need to recognise that successfully dealing with Doctors' health issues may help to prevent admission subsequently to impairment programs.

Colleague and mentor health advice may be difficult for solo practitioners and therefore independent health advice is important.

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?

Whatever the model, separation of impairment programs and self-referral to impairment programs are important aspects of this question. The best model is supported by the profession for the profession, with guidelines as to what would constitute referral to the Board.

Therefore, part funding by the Board may be a sound investment – it would help to guarantee appropriate impairment referral and may help to prevent escalation and subsequent impairment referral.

The model could include:

Medical Board – part funding

AMA/AMADIT – part funding

University – part funding

Profession (especially if AMA does not represent all) – part funding

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?

Already answered.

Don't believe that is it the Board's role to fund completely, but it is a significant stakeholder if program is successful.

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 available 24/7

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

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?

\$10 - \$25

Question 6: Other comments

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