

Spencer D. Gear PhD

Mobile [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Doctor Joanna Flynn,
Chair, Medical Board of Australia,
GPO Box 9958,
Melbourne 3001

30 July 2018

Dear Dr Flynn,

Public consultation on draft revised code of conduct, Good medical practice: A code of conduct for doctors in Australia.

Submission by Spencer D. Gear PhD

I implore the Medical Board of Australia that its Code of Conduct not be changed. The Code needs to continue to affirm the Hippocratic Oath and its Code of Conduct, in spite of 'cultural differences' that want to operate outside of the medical profession's boundaries.

To even suggest that a medical decision must be left solely to the 'cultural' choices of a patient's or family's milieu - without medical information or intervention - is to pursue a dangerous precedent for the medical profession and Australian society.

This new Code seems to be one of censorship for doctors with dissenting views. Please do not prevent robust discussion and debate.

This is a freedom of speech/freedom of religion issue as well. The new Code will put an end to doctors' abilities to discuss and contest various issues from a medical perspective. What will it do to clamping down on any doctor's conscience regarding medical procedures?

Section 2.1 of the code warns doctors, 'You need to acknowledge and consider the effect of your comments and actions outside work, including online, on your professional standing.... You should acknowledge the profession's generally accepted views ... when your personal opinion differs.

Try that line of reasoning with people who oppose vaccination! Do you think any doctor should not vent his/her views of the benefits of vaccination on Twitter, Facebook, in letters-to-the-editor, public presentations, etc? What doctors promote outside of their medical practice is their own business – as long as it is not against the law.

Which cultural views are driving the Medical Board of Australia to accommodate this anti-medical perspective?

The proposed changes to the Code involve violations of freedom of speech, especially outside the world of medical practice.

Section 1.2 of the Code states that 'serious or repeated failure' to meet its standards may result in doctors losing their rights to practise medicine.

In an Australia that promotes freedom of speech, this threat is a distinct attempt to close down dissenting

views. It needs to be rejected - decisively.

This change of Code looks too much like Big Brother's tentacles intruding into the medical profession to shut down those who have ethical and other reasons to speak up.

Please abandon extending this political correctness into the medical profession.

Yours sincerely,

Spencer Gear
