

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

Submission received from: **Dr Clifton Timmins**

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

Yes. It is well known doctors frequently neglect their own health. A confidential and accessible health service would help to address this. In particular, mental health is a concern. Doctors may be reluctant to access services for this if it may be considered a threat to their reputation or registration. A confidential service would help doctors (and their patients) in this situation.

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?

I like the look of the VDHP, and I have heard good things about it.

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?

I think the Board should help. It is all related to providing the best care for patients and having healthy doctors is central to this process. To use a cliché, this is a fence at the top the cliff.

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

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

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

Other services (please list)

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?