

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

I required the assistance of VDHP from 2003, where I was assessed and treated for alcoholism, and monitored by VDHP for 5 years thereafter. I cannot imagine that I would (a) still be alive and (b) still be practicing, without their intervention. The help and assistance of VDHP has been invaluable to me. The notion that the service is under existential threat concerns me greatly, as others such as myself may not be able to avail themselves of their services. I remain forever in the debt of VDHP.

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

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?

Absolutely.

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

Telephone advice available 24/7

Referral to expert practitioners for assessment and management

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

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

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?

>\$40

Question 6: Other comments

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

This service is simply essential.