

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

Submission received from: **Dr A Geoff Fisher**

## 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

## 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?

*Practitioners willing to care for impaired colleagues should be provided with training, a support forum and have easy access to support staff at the Board.*

## 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 should take necessary steps to ensure exemplary care is available for doctors in need. Ideally this should be coordinated through the doctors GP with appropriate specialists who have additional training in assessing and treating other doctors. This does not necessarily have to be a funded external program but coordination of programme should be adequately funded (including workshops for treating doctors) and \$1 a week from each registrant (\$52 per year) should ensure we have an adequately resourced programme to care for our colleagues for the foreseeable future.*

## 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*

*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?

*>\$40*

## Question 6: Other comments

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