



HEALTH ALERT

23 January 2017

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JUDGEMENTS

Commonwealth. Federal Court

13 January 2017 - *Selia v Commonwealth of Australia* [2017] FCA 7 - ADMINISTRATIVE LAW - Judicial Review - Professional Services Review Scheme under Part VAA of the Health Insurance Act 1973 (Cth) - where Professional Services Review Committee found applicant dentist engaged in 'inappropriate practice' as defined in s 82 - meaning of 'initiating' in s 82 - where applicant billed Medicare for dental services in advance of rendering - where dental services provided by dentists employed by applicant were billed using applicant's medicare provider number - where Determining Authority directed applicant should be reprimanded, counselled and required to repay amount to first respondent - whether pre-billing can constitute 'inappropriate practice' - whether conduct of applicant in billing services provided by employees under his medicare number can constitute 'inappropriate practice' - whether findings unlawfully made with respect to services rendered after statutory review period - whether Determining Authority failed to have regard to relevant considerations - whether repayment direction legally unreasonable - where no error established - application dismissed.

Victoria

20 December 2016 - *Syme v Medical Board of Australia (Review and Regulation)* [2016] VCAT 2150 - Practitioner Regulation National Law (Victoria) Act 2009 ss 156, 157 and 202; condition imposed by Medical Board of Australia on practitioner's registration as a form of immediate action; whether sufficient evidence before Board to form a reasonable belief that practitioner posed a serious risk to persons and that it was necessary to take immediate action to protect public health or safety; s 156 criteria not established; Decision of Board set aside.

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (**Tribunal**) reviewed the Medical Board of Australia's (**Board**) decision to take immediate action against Dr Rodney Syme by imposing a condition that he not provide medical care or engage in professional conduct with the primary purpose of ending a person's life.

This occurred after a GP made a mandatory notification to the Board that a terminally ill patient had disclosed that Dr Syme would assist him to end his life by providing Nembutal.

The Board considered that action by a practitioner which has the primary purpose of ending a person's life constitutes a significant departure from accepted professional standards and presents a serious risk to the person, requiring immediate action to protect both the patient and the public.

Dr Syme gave frank and comprehensive evidence regarding his process of assessing and counselling patients. The Tribunal accepted that his intention in providing Nembutal, was to provide relief (palliation) of the psychological and existential suffering experienced by his patients. Palliation occurs because patients feel an increased sense of control and certainty about how their life will end. Dr Syme does not advise patients that they must or should take the Nembutal.

The Tribunal considered it untenable for the Board to reason back from the ultimate effect of ingesting the drug that Dr Syme's intention was necessarily to end that person's life. To do so ignores the holistic approach and palliative effect of his actions.

The Tribunal concluded that the Board's decision be set aside.

Western Australia

13 January 2017 - *East Metropolitan Health Service v Martin* [2017] WASCA 7 - Professional negligence - Medical negligence - Delay in treatment following failed attempt to insert catheter line - Causation - Whether delay in treatment caused injury to right median nerve - Whether corrective surgery could have been undertaken in time to prevent or minimise injury to right median nerve

This case was an appeal from a decision of the Supreme Court of Western Australia in which it was alleged that staff at Armadale Hospital and Fremantle Hospital were negligent in failing to carry out, within a reasonable time, investigation and surgery following an incident with a patient's right arm. The incident occurred in November 2012 when the patient was admitted to Armadale Hospital for treatment of septic arthritis of a facet joint in his spine. During his treatment, a number of failed attempts to insert a catheter line led to the development of a haematoma which in turn caused compression of the right median nerve in

the patient's arm. At first instance it was found the treating doctor had overlooked parts of the patient's notes and that the hospitals' negligence, being the delay in investigation and treatment, was the cause of the patient's injury.

The Minister, who was vicariously liable for the hospitals' negligence, raised ten grounds of appeal relating to causation, past and future economic loss, general damages and gratuitous services. These grounds were dismissed with the exception of ground 7, which alleged that the trial judge erred in failing to comply with section 9 of the *Civil Liability Act 2002 (WA)*, which places restrictions on damages for non-pecuniary loss. It was found by the Court of Appeal that when his Honour had assessed general damages (at \$50,000) he had overlooked the application of section 9(2) resulting in a reduction of the award by \$20,000.

New South Wales

16 January 2017 - *Minister for Health v Paciocco* [2017] NSWSC 4 - MENTAL HEALTH – forensic patient - Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990 - whether final order should be made to extend status as a forensic patient - whether unacceptable risk of causing serious harm to others - whether less restrictive means available – whether (involuntary) civil patient status under Mental Health Act 2007 would adequately manage risk – extension order made PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE – application for anonymisation of the defendant's name - s 162 Mental Health Act 2007 does not apply to proceedings – no order made.

19 January 2017 - *Marden v Pharmacy Council of New South Wales* [2017] NSWCATOD 34 GOVERNMENT INFORMATION – Personal factors of application favouring disclosure – Applicant is pharmacist the subject of a complaint to which access is sought – Complainant has objected to disclosure including disclosure of complainant's identity - Public interest in applicant being provided with her personal information – Public interest in obtaining information to which individual entitled as matter of procedural fairness - To what extent information sought is applicant's personal information – To what extent applicant is entitled to information as a matter of procedural fairness – Procedural fairness only requires disclosure of substance of complaint - Public interest considerations against disclosure – Disclosure could reasonably be expected to reveal complainant's personal information – Whether scheme concerning the handling of complaints under the Health Care Complaints Act 1993 (NSW) has the effect that the complainant's information is not personal information - Whether the decision to refuse access to information is inconsistent with that scheme – Whether complainant knew that complainant's identity would be provided to applicant at time of making complaint – Public interest consideration against disclosure of complainant's personal information outweighs considerations in favour of disclosure of that information – Applicant otherwise entitled to access information in complaint.

13 January 2017 - *Health Care Complaints Commission v CWY* [2017] NSWCATOD 6 - ADMINISTRATIVE LAW — Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NSW) — health practitioner — whether practitioner has an impairment — whether practitioner is not competent to practice — appropriate protective orders where practitioner found not to be competent to practice.

13 January 2017 - *Sinclair v Psychology Council of NSW* [2017] NSWCATAD 8 - ADMINISTRATIVE LAW - Administrative and Equal Opportunity Division - Whether an overriding public interest against disclosure of letter from psychologist to Psychology Council - Whether letter constituted 'excluded information' of the Health Care Complaints Commission - Whether access application was invalid - Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 - Administrative Review Act 1997 - Health Care Complaints Act 1993

LEGISLATION

As a general rule, this bulletin tracks subsidiary legislation at Commonwealth, but not at state level

Commonwealth

16 January 2017 - *Health Insurance (Accredited Pathology Laboratories — Approval) Amendment Principles 2017 (No. 1)* - F2017L00048 as made.

REPORTS

Australia. Department of Health

Media releases

20 January 2017 - [Health Stars Help Tackle Obesity](#) - The Australian Government has announced a new national public awareness campaign to promote the front of pack health stars on packaged foods in an effort to help tackle Australia's obesity epidemic.

18 January 2017 - [Appointment as Assistant Minister for Health](#) - Assistant Minister for Rural Health Dr David Gillespie has welcomed the announcement by the Prime Minister that Greg Hunt will be appointed the new Minister for Health & Sport.

18 January 2017 - [Minister for Aged Care and Indigenous Health Appointment](#) - Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ken Wyatt AM, MP has welcomed the appointment of Greg Hunt as the new Minister for Health.

15 January 2017 - [Record number of Australian lives saved](#) - The Federal Government has announced a record number of Australian lives saved as a result of a surge in the donation of deceased organs in 2016.

Private Health insurance Circulars

3 January 2017 3rd - [PHI 01/17 Prosthesis List Management System \(PLMS\)](#).

Australia. Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the boards

16 January 2017 - [Medical practitioner reprimanded by tribunal for unprofessional performance](#) - A tribunal has reprimanded a medical practitioner and ordered him to pay a fine of \$2,500 plus costs incurred by the Medical Board of Australia (the Board) for behaving in a way that constitutes unsatisfactory professional performance.

16 January 2017 - [Local insights, National Scheme: State and territory summaries published](#) - Individual annual report summaries for each state and territory, offering insights into how the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme is operating across Australia, have now been published.

16 January 2017 - [Public consultation launch](#) - The Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (the Board) has published a consultation paper on proposed revised competency standards for occupational therapists.

Australia. National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

18 January 2017 - [Apply now for CDFs and Partnership Projects funding](#) - Funding for 2017 Career Development Fellowships commencing in 2018 is now open. Career Development Fellowships (CDFs) are highly competitive, four-year fellowships that recognise and provide support for the most outstanding early to mid-career health and medical researchers in each Fellowship category. CDFs can be applied for at one of two levels depending on the applicant's career stage—CDF Level 1 or CDF Level 2. Applications close 8 March 2017. Funding for [2017 Partnership Projects—Peer Review Cycle](#) (PRC) #1 is also now open. NHMRC Partnerships for Better Health—Partnership Projects will help create partnerships among decision makers, policy makers, managers, clinicians and researchers. This funding scheme provides funding and support to create new opportunities for researchers and policy makers to work together to define research questions, undertake research, interpret the findings and implement the findings into policy and practice. Applications close at 5pm AEDT on Wednesday 12 April 2017.

13 January 2017 - [NHMRC Research Tracker](#)

Australia. Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

19 January 2017 - [Generic Medicines Working Group – 1 December 2016](#) - The communiqué for the Generic Medicines Working Group's 1 December meeting is now available.

Australia. Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)

16 January 2017 - [Australian Public Assessment Reports for prescription medicines \(AusPARs\)](#) - Added Human Papillomavirus 9 valent vaccine (Gardasil 9) and Kaldyeco (Ivacaftor).

19 January 2017 - [Metformin extended release tablets](#) - Update - medicine shortages change in status

19 January 2017 - [Folate and folic acid for use in listed medicines](#) - A new folates and folic acid for use in listed medicines fact sheet has been published.

18 January 2017 - [TGA statutory advisory committees](#) - In response to the Medicines and Medical Devices Review, the TGA Statutory Committees have been restructured.

16 January 2017 - [Scheduling delegate's final decisions, January 2017](#) - Final decisions and reasons for chemicals not referred to the November 2016 ACCS and New Chemical Entities.

13 January 2017 - [Updates to the Prescribing Medicines in Pregnancy database](#) - Six new registered medicines added and 2 previously registered medicines added.

13 January 2017 - [Consultations on adoption of European Union guidelines in Australia: Outcome of previous consultation](#) - EU/ICH guidelines adopted by the TGA following consultation within the TGA and with relevant external stakeholders.

Australian Digital Health Agency

17 January 2017 - [Rural and Remote Clinician Webinar](#) - Taking place on Wednesday 1 February 2017 at 11:30am-1:00pm AWST/1:00pm-2:30pm ACST, a webinar with rural and remote clinicians to gather feedback on how data and technology can be used to improve health, care and the quality of life for Australians in rural and remote communities.

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

On the Radar – 16 January 2017 – Issue 306 ([PDF 660KB](#)) ([Word 726KB](#))

Australia. National Blood Authority

13 January 2017 - [Imported plasma and recombinant product supply contracts](#) - As the NBA's imported plasma and recombinant product supply contracts expire over the period 30 June 2017 to 30 June 2018, the NBA is currently conducting consultations with suppliers and stakeholders via a Request for Information (RFI) and stakeholder consultation paper to inform forward procurement decision making.

12 January 2017 - [Update to Supply Arrangements for Domestic Intravenous Immunoglobulin](#) - INTRAGAM® 10 to replace INTRAGAM® P, commencing March 2017 The National Blood Authority advises that the transition arrangements have been finalised for the change to domestically produced IVIg. Detailed information regarding the transition process for key stakeholders is now available.

Australian Capital Territory. Health Directorate

13 January 2017 - [PURPLE Crying Program launched to help educate new Canberra parents](#) - Minister for Health, Meegan Fitzharris today launched the PURPLE Crying Program in the ACT to educate parents and caregivers about increased infant crying and the dangers of shaking an infant. The Period of PURPLE Crying® Program is an evidence-based prevention initiative used internationally and across Australia. The program aims to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries that can occur when a frustrated parent or caregiver shakes a crying baby.

New South Wales. Ministry of Health

Media Releases

19 January 2017 - [New Molong ambulance station site revealed](#) - Health Minister Jillian Skinner today announced the new Molong NSW Ambulance Station will be located at the town's Multipurpose Service (MPS) site on King Street. The existing ambulance station on Riddell Street will be replaced with a modern, fit-for-purpose station co-located at the new MPS with other newly-built health services, including aged care.

19 January 2017 - [300 scholarships for Diploma of Enrolled Nursing](#) - Program placements are available in locations across NSW for the right candidates who are motivated and looking for a diverse and dynamic career. On successful course completion and registration, scholarship recipients will be offered a job as an Enrolled Nurse in a NSW Health facility (subject to standard recruitment processes).

10 January 2017 - [Sydney air pollution health alert](#) - NSW Health urged people with respiratory conditions to take caution with high air pollution levels in Sydney forecast today. The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage have advised NSW Health that Sydney is predicted to experience poor air quality tomorrow due to high ozone levels.

Policy Directives & Guidelines

18 January 2017 - [Specialist Mental Health Services for Older People \(SMHSOP\) Community Model of Care Guideline](#) GL2017_003.

17 January 2017 - [Maternity - Maternal Group B Streptococcus \(GBS\) and minimisation of neonatal early-onset GBS sepsis](#) GL2017_002.

13 January 2017 - [Staff Specialist Rights of Private Practice Arrangements](#) PD2017_002.

9 January 2017 - [Responding to Needs of People with Disability during Hospitalisation](#) PD2017_001.

9 January 2017 - [NSW Framework for New Health Technologies and Specialised Services](#) GL2017_001.

NSW Health Care Complaints Commission

10 January 2017 - [Ms Jane Phillips – Unsatisfactory professional conduct](#) - In May 2016 the Health Care Complaints Commission prosecuted a complaint about registered nurse Jane Phillips before a Nursing and Midwifery Professional Standards Committee. It concerned her care of a six month old boy at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital in October 2013 who arrived with abdominal pain, vomiting and poor fluid intake. The Committee found the Commission's complaint against Nurse Phillips of unsatisfactory professional conduct proved.

Queensland. Department of Health

18 January 2017 - [Queensland hospitals welcome next generation of doctors](#) - Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk has welcomed the next generation of Queensland doctors who will start work in 18 of the State's public hospitals this week.

17 January 2017 - [Next stage of \\$70M Roma Hospital development](#) - The next stage of the \$70 million Roma Hospital development will get underway this month with the demolition of the Pathology Building, the old nurses' quarters and the hospital swimming pool to clear the area for new construction.

19 January 2017 - [Are you a Queenslander in your 20s?](#) - This post takes a close look at some of the health issues we'd recommend having on your radar throughout your 20s.

13 January 2017 - [Want to eat healthier? Set up these contingency plans to avoid old habits](#) Every time you go to the supermarket or decide what to eat, you're fighting temptation on multiple fronts. This is why one of the first steps you can take, when it comes to healthy eating, is sitting down and [putting together a healthy eating plan](#).

17 January 2017 - [#ThisIsRSQ: Shining a light on Retrieval Services Queensland](#) - A new video and social media campaign from Queensland Health is set to emphasize the role of the unit, which forms the backbone of the state's integrated aeromedical system and sits alongside Queensland's emergency services and disaster management operations.

South Australia. Department for Health & Ageing

17 January 2017 - [Media release: Meningococcal case January 2017](#) - A case of invasive meningococcal disease has been notified in a five month-old baby from metropolitan Adelaide. The baby has been admitted to hospital and is in a stable condition. The meningococcal strain has not yet been identified.

January 15, 2017 - **New scanning machine helps treat SA cancer, Alzheimer's patients** - The State Government has provided a first-hand look at one of the new, state of the art pieces of medical equipment that will be used at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital.

16 January 2017 - **Media release: Businesses urged to check cooling towers following legionella cases** - SA Health is urging businesses in metropolitan Adelaide to decontaminate their air-conditioning cooling towers following the notification of four cases of Legionnaires' disease. SA Health's Acting Chief Public Health Officer Dr Kevin Buckettt said fluctuating temperatures can contribute to the growth of *Legionella* bacteria.

Tasmania. Department of Health & Human Services

18 January 2017 - **New Health Minister** - I welcome the appointment of Greg Hunt as the federal Health Minister. The Premier and I have already been in touch with Mr Hunt this morning. I am now making arrangements to catch up with the new Health Minister in person, as soon as possible, to continue negotiations on the Mersey Community Hospital and our important health reform agenda to rebuild Tasmania's health system.

Victoria. Department of Health

January 19, 2017 - **Next Phase Of Doctors In Secondary Schools Rollout** - Thousands of Victorian students will have access to the healthcare they need thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Education James Merlino, Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan and Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards today visited Eaglehawk Secondary College in Bendigo to release the starting dates for the remaining 80 schools taking part in the Doctors in Secondary Schools program. In October last year the first 20 schools providing on-site GP services were announced. Another 40 schools, including Eaglehawk Secondary College, will commence from term three 2017 and the final 40 schools from term one 2018. Participating schools will be partnered with local doctors who will visit up to one day a week, giving students the support they need early on before health problems affect their studies – including referrals to specialists.

Western Australia. Department of Health

Media Releases

17 January 2017 - **Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Development: Building to start on Dalwallinu Health Service** - Dalwallinu residents are set to benefit from improved health care with a wide-ranging refurbishment of the local health service to start this month, after building company Pindan was awarded the construction tender.

17 January 2017 - **Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Development: Quairading Health Service revamp ready to start** - Redevelopment of the Quairading Health Service will start this month, after BGC Construction was awarded the building tender.

16 January 2017 - **All clear for Drakesbrook Weir algae bloom** - The Department of Health has lifted a recent warning to avoid recreational activities in Lake Moyanup (Drakesbrook Weir) due to a blue-green algae bloom.

16 January 2017 - **All clear for Mindarie marina algae bloom** - The Department of Health has lifted a recent warning to avoid contact with water containing red tide algae in Mindarie marina. Recent water tests have confirmed that algae levels at the marina had returned to levels which mean that swimming, wading, fishing, canoeing and other recreational activities can now be undertaken safely.

15 January 2017 - **Campaign highlights health care options** - Last year more than 2,800 Western Australians spent Australia Day in the Emergency Department (ED).

13 January 2017 - **Immunisation rates on the rise** - Influenza vaccination rates among pregnant women have increased significantly over the past four years, helping to further protect the health of thousands of Western Australian mothers and their babies.

Policies

17 January 2017 MP 0045/17 - [Urgency Categorisation and Access Policy for Public Direct Access Adult Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Services](#) - The *Urgency Categorisation and Access Policy for Public Direct Access Adult Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Services* provides advice to Health Service Providers and contracted health entities on urgency categorisation and access criteria for adult patients requiring a planned direct access gastrointestinal endoscopy procedure within WA.

Publications

19 December 2017 - [Elective Surgery Wait List reports](#).

15 December 2017 - [Healthview](#).

United Kingdom. Department of Health

29 December 2016 - [Barcode technology helping to improve patient safety](#) - Barcodes are being used to trace NHS patients and their treatments, manage medical supplies and monitor the effectiveness of equipment.

Australian Medical Association (AuMA)

19 January 2017 - [AuMA calls for Commonwealth to spend at least ten percent of health budget on general practice](#) - The AuMA last week released a new *Position Statement on General Practice in Primary Health Care* and called on the Government to set a target for funding GP services, to deliver extra funding for general practice research, and to set up a center of excellence in general practice and primary care research.

19 January 2017 - [AuMA campaigning on Medicare freeze continues](#) - AuMA President, Dr Michael Gannon in multiple radio interviews this week highlighted the impact of the ongoing freeze on Medicare rebates on GPs and their patients. Dr Gannon spoke about the challenges of balancing the rising cost of practice with the pressure to ensure vulnerable patients have access to care. The AuMA recognises that GPs need support with this when looking to review their billing practices and provides [a number of resources](#) to assist with the process.

19 January 2017 - [AuMA Indigenous People's Medical Scholarship 2017 – Applications closing soon](#) - The AuMA recognises the critical importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors through the AuMA Indigenous Peoples' Medical Scholarship scheme.

19 January 2017 - [MJA: Towards revalidation](#) - In the year's first edition of the Medical Journal of Australia (MJA) the subject of revalidation is discussed in a perspectives article by Dr Joanna Flynn, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia (MBA). Dr Flynn notes the endorsement by international medical regulators of a new continuing competency framework designed to ensure the ongoing competence of doctors around the world. The MBA is examining what approach to revalidation will work best in Australia but has ruled out the prospect of doctors having to resit their Fellowship exams every 5 years as is the case in the UK.

18 January 2017 - [AuMA welcomes new Health Minister](#) - Greg Hunt's ministerial experience in the senior portfolios of Environment and Industry should prepare him for the demands of his new role as Health Minister, AuMA President Dr Michael Gannon says.

12 January 2017 - [Time to prepare for year ahead](#) - The AuMA wishes all of its GP members a very happy, healthy and successful 2017.

12 January 2017 - [Identify yourself as an AuMA Family Doctor](#) - To enhance the concept with patients of the Family Doctor, the AuMA has made available a logo for GP members to use in identifying and promoting themselves as a Family Doctor. The use of the 2017 AuMA Family Doctor Logo is a sign to the community and your medical and health professional colleagues that you provide patient-centred, holistic, and longitudinal medical care.

12 January 2017 - [AuMA Careers and Professional Development Services](#) - If you are a GP considering going into practice on your own, or an experienced GP seeking to carve out a new career or retire from practice, the AuMA Career Advice Hub is on hand to provide practical advice and information.

12 January 2017 - **GP Desktop Tool** - The AuMA knows your time is precious and has developed the GP Desktop Tool so you can quickly and easily access a range of forms, guides and clinical tools.

12 January 2017 - **Medical Employment** - If you're seeking to employ medical staff for your practice, or looking for a new medical role in the new year, then visit doctorportal Jobs.

12 January 2017 - **Help for revising billing practices** - If you and your practice are considering moving to patient-billing the AuMA has a number of resources available to members to assist as we recognise this can be difficult and challenging.

12 January 2017 - **Position Statement on Better Access to High Speed Broadband for Rural and Remote Health Care** - The AuMA this week warned that health services in rural, regional, and remote Australia could fall even further behind city services, without urgent Government action to ensure all Australians have access to affordable and reliable high speed broadband.

12 January 2017 - **ePIP: Upload or Repay** - Practices participating in the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) Digital Health Incentive are reminded that they have until January 31 2017 to meet their cumulative quota for Shared Health Summary (SHS) uploads for the last three quarters. The Department of Health has advised those practices that don't meet the total requirement of 0.5 per cent of their SWPE per quarter will be required to pay back any payments received to date for the incentive.

12 January 2017 - **AuMA Indigenous People's Medical Scholarship 2017 – Applications closing soon** - The AuMA recognises the critical importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors through the AuMA Indigenous Peoples' Medical Scholarship scheme. Applications are being sought for the 2017 Scholarship from eligible Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students who have entered an Australian university to study medicine.

12 January 2017 - **Information for GPs re BSWAT payments** - GPs of patients with an intellectual impairment who were supported employees of Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE) between 2004 and 2014 are advised their patients may be eligible to make a claim under the Government's Business Services Wage Assessment Tool (BSWAT) Payment Scheme for incorrectly assessed wages and they may be asked to verify the medical information of those patients.

15 December 2016 - **AuMA blasts secrecy, lack of consultation on skin items** - The AuMA has called on the Government to reverse its substantial and unannounced changes to a number of MBS skin services items, which have forced clinicians to cancel appointments and patients to delay treatment for potential skin cancers.

15 December 2016 - **Risks for GPs with new drug importation start-up** - AuMA Vice President, Dr Tony Bartone, says GPs may come under unfair pressure to prescribe non-approved drugs to desperate patients, following moves by a Dutch start-up to help **Australian patients import drugs that are yet to be approved by the Therapeutic Goods Association** (TGA).

15 December 2016 - **Government trying to do primary health reform on the cheap** - In this week's issue of - **Australian Medicine**, Chair of the AuMA Council of General Practice, Dr Richard Kidd, writes about the unfolding realities of the Health Care Home initiative. He urges practices that are thinking of signing up to become a Health Care Home to carefully consider what it will mean for the practice and its patients before deciding to participate.

15 December 2016 - **Final report on Lyme-like illness released** - The final report of the Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Growing evidence of an emerging tick-borne disease that causes a Lyme-like illness for many Australian patients*, has been released by the Government. The report has three major themes, putting patients first, testing for the infection, and treating the illness.

The report's 12 recommendations focus on urgently increasing funding for research into tick-borne pathogens and diagnostic testing; developing medically-appropriate treatment and clinical treatment guidelines; and establishing a multidisciplinary approach (including general practice, and specialists with expertise in neurology, psychiatry, rheumatology, immunology, infectious diseases and microbiology) to addressing tick-borne illness across all jurisdictions.

15 December 2016 - [Applications invited for AuMA Indigenous People's Medical Scholarship 2017](#) - The AuMA recognises the critical importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors through the AuMA Indigenous Peoples' Medical Scholarship scheme.

15 December 2016 - [Help for veterans with alcohol and other substance use disorders](#) - The Department of Veterans' Affairs (**DVA**) has established a panel of community-based providers to assist in treating eligible members of the veteran community who are experiencing alcohol and other substance use disorders. This panel enhances the existing suite of services available to treat veterans, including providing a greater choice of service options, across varied service settings and in more areas of Australia.

15 December 2016 - [Create a PRODA Account to maintain access to HPOS](#) - Among the Department of Human Services' latest News for Health Professionals is advice that, from 1 January 2017, GPs will need to use their Provider Digital Access (**PRODA**) account to access Health Professional Online Services (**HPOS**). Changes to internet browsing software will impact the use of a Medicare Individual Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) certificate to access HPOS.

American Medical Association (AMA)

12 January 2017 - [JAMA viewpoint Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Diseases](#) - This Viewpoint discusses the importance of continuing infectious diseases research, even after outbreaks subside and disease progression becomes endemic.

10 January 2017 - [AMA Statement on Reports of New Commission on Vaccine Safety](#) - The AMA is concerned that a new commission on vaccine safety would adversely impact parental decision-making and immunization practices.

ABOUT US

Michael Regos



Michael is the head of the DLA Piper health litigation group.

He practises in the areas of health law, insurance law, medical negligence and coronial enquiries. He represents Victorian public hospitals and their insurers, the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority and is the solicitor of choice for Australia's second-largest private health operator.

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