

MEDIA RELEASE

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AMA reassured by coordinated response to IV fluid shortages

The federal, state and territory government recent response and coordination efforts on IV fluid shortages provides growing reassurance that patients will continue to be able to access care across the health sector, the Australian Medical Association said today.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said media reports on the issue had caused concerns among patients and providers, however coordination efforts by governments meant steps were being taken to address the issue.

“As a surgeon who works in both public and private hospitals, I know all too well how critical IV fluid is to providing high quality, timely care,” Professor Robson said.

“The AMA was quick to engage with governments when this issue first came to light and has been reassured by how seriously our concerns have been taken.

“The cross-jurisdictional response group established by Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler is meeting frequently to share data; co-ordinate action on IV fluid usage and supply; establish forecasts for future needs; discuss logistics and issue clinical guidance and updates to our front-line healthcare workers.

“This effort should be comforting for Australian patients, no matter where they live, or where they are being treated.”

Professor Robson said most IV fluids used in Australia are produced locally and the AMA had been advised that the local producer was continuing to operate at full capacity — working to meet the regular demand in orders from public and private hospitals.

“Responsible and measured steps are being taken to conserve supply when necessary and we are now seeing real coordination of efforts to ensure that we not only have enough supply, but it also gets to where it is needed.

“We also recognise that some practices, including general practices, might be facing short term disruptions. I want to assure those practices that governments are working to address these disruptions quickly.”

“The AMA will continue to monitor the situation closely and provide feedback through the cross jurisdictional working group that we are part of — ensuring that clinician feedback continues to inform decisions being taken at the highest levels.”

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