

Australian Medical Association Limited
ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**ACCC PROPOSES TO RENEW AMA AUTHORISATION THAT
 BENEFITS PATIENTS, GPs, AND GENERAL PRACTICE**

The ACCC has today released a draft decision to renew for another 10 years the AMA’s existing authorisation that protects AMA member and non-member GPs from action under the Competition and Consumer Act (2010).

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said that the AMA welcomes the ACCC’s draft decision, which is now subject to a further period of consultation.

“The authorisation, which is very important for GPs, has a long history,” Dr Gannon said.

“AMA advocacy on this matter has provided significant benefits for GPs.

“The ACCC’s draft determination has accepted that the authorisation continues to be in the public interest.”

The specific conduct that has been authorised by the decision includes:

- Intra-practice price setting - this allows GPs in a practice to discuss the fees charged to patients, which provides patients with certainty about the costs, if any, they face when they visit their GP or general practice.
- Collective bargaining as single practice for Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) services to public hospitals – this is particularly relevant in rural areas where GPs in a practice can negotiate collectively with their local hospital about the services they provide to the local hospital, which supports recruitment and retention and patient access to services.
- Collective bargaining as a single practice with Primary Health Networks (PHNs) – with PHNs increasingly involved in new models of care, such as the integrated care pilot in NSW for people with chronic disease, this allows GPs in a practice to be able to discuss the services they can provide for patients and how they are funded.

Dr Gannon said that, overall, the authorisation provides GPs with legal protection to go about business that is vital to the survival of their practices and their ability to continue providing valuable health services to their patients and communities.

“It avoids the administrative and legal costs that GPs would otherwise incur in having to seek legal and other advice that would be needed in the absence of this authorisation,” Dr Gannon said.

“We expect a final decision from the ACCC early next year.”

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CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753