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**AMA URGES HEALTH MINISTERS TO DO THE RIGHT THING ON MANDATORY REPORTING**

The AMA is urging all Australian Health Ministers to do the right thing by Australia’s doctors and their patients when the COAG Health Council meets tomorrow by agreeing on consistent national mandatory reporting laws that incorporate amendments proposed by the AMA.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that the AMA has long called for changes to the mandatory reporting laws that will protect the health of doctors, which in turn will benefit patients.

“Mandatory reporting affects every doctor, their families, their loved ones, their colleagues ...and their patients,” Dr Bartone said.

“Our doctors desperately need legislation that does not actively discourage them from seeking medical treatment when they need it. Doctors are patients too. They should have the same rights to access confidential high-quality medical treatment as their own patients and all other Australians do.

“We urgently need a nationally consistent approach to mandatory reporting provisions. It will provide confidence to doctors. It will enable and empower them to seek treatment for their own health conditions anywhere in Australia.

“The AMA has worked for many years, in good faith, at both the State/Territory and Federal level, to highlight how sensible and practical amendments could and should be made to address this issue.

“We have highlighted how the West Australian model currently operates successfully to provide access to health services for doctors, while at the same time protecting public safety.

“We have highlighted how the AMA’s preferred so-called ‘WA lite’ model could do the same across the country.

“Our former President, Dr Michael Gannon, appeared at a COAG meeting to explain how it could work.

“We have also provided advice to Ministers on how alternative proposals could be modified to give them the best chance of success.

“Tomorrow is the perfect opportunity for the Health Ministers to finally get this right. It is time to stop the pain, suffering, and, in some tragic cases, the suicides of our hardworking doctors.

“But there is no point in amending the law in a way that won’t solve the problem. The COAG Health Council must accept the AMA’s sensible amendments and come out of tomorrow’s meeting with mandatory reporting laws that protect doctors and their patients.”

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