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AMA SUPPORTS INVESTIGATION INTO DOCTOR BOOKING SERVICE

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that the AMA supports the decision of Health Minister, Greg Hunt, to request the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) to inquire into the data sharing procedures of doctor appointment booking service, HealthEngine.

Dr Bartone said that recent media reports raise serious issues, and warrant examination by the Information Commissioner.

“The AMA is concerned about any irregularities or threats related to patient privacy, patient consent, the AMA Code of Ethics, and medical ethics more broadly,” Dr Bartone said.

“We also have concerns about anything that could diminish community trust in the medical profession and any actions that may undermine public confidence in embracing electronic health initiatives, which the AMA strongly supports.

“There is also the serious matter of the potential of third parties to profit from having access to confidential and private patient information.

“The AMA’s concerns extend beyond HealthEngine to other apps, websites, and services, currently being promoted by commercial entities and health sector bodies, which raise similar questions about privacy and ethics.

“We look forward to seeing the OAIC report on HealthEngine, and we will work closely with the Minister and the Government to ensure that patient privacy is protected.

“The AMA will also continue to work closely with the Government and its agencies to ensure support and uptake of important electronic health initiatives, including My Health Record,” Dr Bartone said.

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