

Media Release

[16 October 2020]

For immediate release

New national framework launched to support mental health and wellbeing of Australian medical professionals

The **Every Doctor, Every Setting: A National Framework** was officially launched today, as part of a national commitment to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of Australian doctors and medical students.

The **Every Doctor, Every Setting: A National Framework** was developed under the guidance of a national working group and in consultation with doctors, doctors in training and medical students in addition to a review of best practice evidence.

It aims to guide coordinated action on the mental health of doctors and medical students through target areas including - improving training and work environments, recognising and responding to those needing support, improving the response to doctors and medical students impacted, the culture of the medical profession to enable wellbeing and coordinated action and accountability.

According to Australian Medical Association (AMA) President Dr Omar Khorshid the time is right to set an Australian reform agenda that positions the mental health and wellbeing of the medical profession as a national priority, requiring a coordinated and resourced approach.

“We know that environments that value, develop and support the medical profession are conducive to good patient care,” Dr Korshid said.

“The **Every Doctor, Every Setting: A National Framework** targets the structural and environmental risk factors which can impact on the medical profession, outlining actions we can take to support the mental health of doctors and medical students.

“Doctors and medical students face a range of pressures and stressors over the course of their training and career and it is vital that we address those on an individual level and as a profession.

“It is vital that we work together to make sure appropriate support and initiatives are in place to support doctors and medical students and to build on the great work that is already being done.

“Nowhere is this better illustrated than in times of crisis like COVID 19.”

The new online resource was developed and based on research conducted by **Everymind**, a national Institute dedicated to the prevention of mental ill-health and suicide.

According to **Everymind** Acting Director, Associate Professor Carmel Loughland evidence indicates that doctors in Australia are at higher risk for mental ill-health and suicide compared to the general population.

“Evidence in Australia indicates that doctors and medical students experience above average outcomes for physical health, but they are at higher risk for mental ill-health and suicide compared to the general population,” Associate Professor Loughland said.

Every Doctor, Every Setting

“We also know that according to best practice research, improving the wellbeing of doctors and medical students is a key enabler of quality patient care and healthier communities.

“During consultation we learnt that when mental ill-health is recognised, doctors and medical students are often reluctant to seek help due to strong social and self-stigma and fears of appearing unhealthy and weak.

“This framework identifies a number of key themes and concerns among doctors, doctors in training and medical students that can be addressed across all medical settings to aide action and initiate broad reaching reform.”

Individuals, organisations, hospitals and governments can all be involved in taking action and showing collective support for the framework through various steps by signing, sharing and showing how they will be implementing the framework via: www.drs4drs.com.au/resource-hub

The national working group which guided this framework comprised representatives from the AMA, **Everymind**, Australian Medical Students’ Association, Orygen, United Synergies, Black Dog Institute, Queensland Doctors Health Programme, Doctors Health Services Board as well as independent registrars.

It was funded by the Australian Government as part of The Prevention Hub (co-led by the Black Dog Institute and **Everymind**) and specific project funding for *Tackling Mental Ill-Health in Doctors and Medical Students*.

For more information, visit:

www.drs4drs.com.au/resource-hub

Access to a network of independent doctors’ health advisory services around the country that provide triage and referral services as well as education and other support is available at www.drs4drs.com.au

Doctors and medical students who are struggling with their mental health can now access a free, confidential 24/7 telehealth service on 1300 374 377 (1300 DR4 DRS).

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