

11 January 2017

New Industry-wide Code of Conduct for Medical Deputising in 2017

The national peak body for Medical Deputising (NAMDS) is requiring high standards of its members and has secured wide-spread support of the sector to develop a new code of conduct in 2017.

The framework for the new code of conduct is contained in recommendations made late last year in the NAMDS submission to the Medicare Benefits Schedule after hours item review.

Chief Medical Director of the National Association of Medical Deputising Services, Dr Umberto Russo said the Code of Conduct will enhance quality, address frequent users and continuity of care with the patient's regular GP.

"The code of conduct has been under discussion for some months and the general principles have been approved by the Annual General Meeting of NAMDS," Dr Russo said.

The Code of Conduct will include sector-wide protocols for encouraging patients without a regular GP to form a clinical relationship with a GP, laying emphasis on the benefits of a comprehensive, coordinated and continuous relationship.

"We will now consult with GPs, stakeholders, the Commonwealth and the State Health Department with a view to detailing protocols that should apply to all modern medical deputising services."

"The Code of Conduct will maintain and enhance high standards and see national agreed protocols for all medical deputising services, be they small, regional or national.

"I urge all medical deputising services to join in and embrace the high road of quality and continuity of care."

The National Association of Medical Deputising (NAMDS) code of conduct will complement the existing stringent Health Department guidelines governing medical deputising services and include standard triage profiles for directing patients to see their regular GP for routine matters and of course to emergency when that is warranted.

The protocols will also address 'frequent user' requests; special patient instructions from GPs; informing patients when a regular practice is open; and agreed language to use in all awareness campaigns to ensure services are used appropriately.

In addition standard sector-wide protocols will address attempted use of the service by individuals with a substance or drug dependency (and other dangerous circumstances) to ensure safety of all MDS doctors.

Media contact: Tim O'Halloran 0409 059 617