

Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



Wednesday, 9 March, 2016

TAKING A STAND AGAINST BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IN THE HEALTH SYSTEM

Minister for Health Jill Hennessy today launched the Australian Medical Association (AMA) Victoria's strategy to address widespread bullying, discrimination and harassment in Victoria's health system.

The strategy was developed following the AMA Victoria's Setting the Standard Summit last November that brought together 180 people including Ms Hennessy, doctors, students, hospital leaders, college representatives and authorities to discuss cultural change in the medical profession.

The Summit received more than 350 suggestions on how the medical profession can change its culture and foster a more progressive and transparent workplace, free from bullying and harassment.

Four consistent themes were identified including raising awareness of unacceptable behaviour, giving people a voice to raise concerns, investing in training and education and developing a consistent system wide approach.

Everyone is entitled to work in a safe and professional environment and it is vital that staff feel supported to raise concerns and make complaints without fear of reprisal.

The Andrews Labor Government is determined to ensure every Victorian has access to the very best health care, and that our hospitals and healthcare organisations are safe, respectful and healthy places to work.

That's why the Government is currently developing a comprehensive strategy to address the challenge of workplace bullying and harassment in health services.

We are also requiring every Victorian public health service to demonstrate a commitment to occupational health and safety through their Statement of Priorities agreements.

This means all public health services must now implement strategies that will promote a positive workplace culture and prevent bullying.

The Government is also supporting Change Day 2016 on March 16 that will see the health and community care sector undertake activities highlighting the importance of a safe work environment that is free from bullying, intimidation and harassment.

Last year Ms Hennessy also requested the Victorian Auditor-General investigate the nature and extent of bullying and harassment in the public health system and identify opportunities for change. This report is expected to be tabled in Parliament later this month.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

"A climate of bullying and harassment in the workplace is an unhealthy culture and it is simply unacceptable. No change is not an option."

"Bullying and harassment is everyone's problem and everyone must participate to achieve genuine and meaningful change."

"I congratulate the AMA Victoria for taking a stand to stamp out workplace bullying in the medical profession."

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