

ADVOCACY FOR HEALTH

2014 Victorian Election: A Call To All Parties





AMA VICTORIA'S KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTION

ADVOCACY FOR DOCTORS

Ensure that doctors have the resources they need to provide quality patient care.

ADVOCACY FOR PATIENTS

Ensure patients can access appropriate healthcare in a timely manner.

ADVOCACY FOR THE COMMUNITY

Ensure that public policy is designed to make our community as healthy as it can be.

VICTORIA'S HEALTH SYSTEM IS UNDER THREAT

Victoria's health system has suffered from long term under-investment by the State, combined with recent cuts by the Commonwealth.

The future of Victoria's health system will rely on sufficient investment by the State and a commitment to mitigate any Commonwealth cuts.

Funding in the health system must continue to increase in line with population growth and demand for services.

AMA Victoria wants the Victorian health system to work smarter. We should focus on taking advantage of technology

and maximising efficiency in our health system. We need to link up various healthcare services, provide more choices for patients, and work smarter for our health dollar.

Key to this is innovation and transparency. We need to know what is happening in our hospitals and health systems so we can direct resources, plan for future growth, and provide the best, most timely patient care possible.

It's about care to the right person, in the right place, at the right time.

ADVOCACY FOR DOCTORS

Victoria's doctors are the backbone of our health system.

Medical Workforce

AMA Victoria does not accept any form of task substitution. The medical practitioner must remain at the forefront of formulating diagnoses, overseeing the management of patients and providing timely interventions to maintain the health of the patient.

Ensure access to postgraduate training for all Victorian medical graduates.

There is a growing number of Victorian medical graduates. In 2007, there were 347 medical graduates, comparatively 847 are projected to graduate this year. As these numbers continue to rise,

junior doctor training positions must increase.

Medical internships are essential in order to gain registration with AHPRA and to fully qualify as a medical doctor. AMA Victoria calls on the State to ensure all graduates are offered internship and junior doctor training positions.

AMA Victoria recommends utilising non-public hospital settings for some of these training positions, such as private hospitals, community healthcare centres and Aboriginal medical services. Undertaking training in community settings will broaden junior doctors' scope of practice and

provide essential services in areas of need.

Furthermore, the State needs to assume responsibility for the Prevocational General Practice Placements Program (PGPPP) in Victoria – failing to do so will substantially reduce the number of GP training places.

To counteract the maldistribution of the medical workforce, employment distribution must be underpinned by reliable workforce planning studies and consideration must be given to incentives for attracting doctors to geographical areas of need and also to specialties experiencing shortages.

Information systems to support doctors

Invest in clinician led information communications systems.

Significant ICT improvements are needed when it comes to transferring patient information between hospital settings (such as between an emergency department and a ward) and also between hospital and community settings (such as from hospital to general practice, ie. patient discharge summaries).

Identifying a patient's GP upon hospital admission must become core practice to enable better communication between the hospital and the patient's regular treating physician.

Secure Messaging is necessary as this can provide patient information, imaging and test results, medical photography, discharge summaries and medication lists in electronic formats almost immediately. This electronic platform increases the timeliness of information transfer, improves legibility and increases useability. It is time to move beyond faxes!

To ensure the success of any ICT system, it is essential that clinicians play a lead role in the development, design and implementation of any new system.



ADVOCACY FOR PATIENTS

Information on health resources must be available and transparent to ensure that Victorians are able to make better informed decisions about their healthcare.

Capacity to provide timely and effective care

Increase the number of open and available beds in Melbourne’s growth areas to match increases in population and demand for services.

Victoria’s population is increasing. In 2012-13, Wyndham experienced 7.6 per cent growth, Whittlesea had 5.4 per cent growth and Melton had 4.7 per cent growth. It is unsurprising that patient presentations at hospitals in these growth areas have dramatically increased.

Additional hospital beds are required to ensure that these key growth areas are able to meet the needs of the growing

population. Funding must also be provided for additional medical and nursing staff, the equipment and other resources required to care for the patient.

The State must prioritise funding measures to ensure that no hospital beds or services are lost as a result of Federal Budget cuts.

Transparency to promote access to healthcare

Publish quarterly outpatient waiting lists and data on the number of available beds in all Victorian public hospitals.

The State must provide detailed reports of outpatient waiting lists and also public hospital bed data. We need to know how many people are waiting, and how many beds are available, as this in turn will determine what areas need more funding and will enable patients to make informed choices about their care.

Currently, elective surgery waiting lists do not reflect the actual time patients wait for surgery. Patients needing surgery can wait years for an outpatient clinic appointment. This is before they’re even put on the elective surgery waiting list.

Outpatient waiting lists must be published and show the number

of people waiting and the length of time spent waiting – detailed by hospital and by speciality. Transparency is needed here.

Similarly, the State must release public hospital bed data to show how many beds are available, their location, type of bed and their occupancy rate. This information must be released regularly as it will enable patients to make informed decisions about their healthcare. Transparency is needed here.

Victorians have been deprived of this vital information for too long. It is time for a firm commitment to transparency and openness in our health system.



ADVOCACY FOR THE COMMUNITY

The government has a responsibility to ensure that the environment within which we live is as healthy as possible. People should be supported to make healthy choices and public policy should encourage this.

Tobacco reform

Victoria must introduce a state-wide smoking ban in all outdoor dining areas.

Victoria is currently the only state in Australia that has not committed to a state-wide smoking ban in outdoor dining areas. Due to this long-term inaction, and highlighting the State's soft approach to tobacco reform, Victoria has received the Dirty Ashtray Award for three years in a row.

The state must commit to the introduction of uniform, state-wide bans on smoking in all dining areas including a detailed plan of when legislation will be introduced, when the bans will come into effect and if exemptions will be granted.

Implement a state wide licensing scheme for the sale of tobacco products.

We recommend introducing a licensing system for tobacco retailers, such as the ones in place in NSW, WA, SA, NT and TAS.

Licensing arrangements would assist enforcing a number of tobacco control measures and provide a comprehensive list of tobacco retail outlets across the state. Identifying what areas have the highest number of tobacco retailers would be beneficial for targeted health campaigns.

Introducing a tobacco licensing fee would discourage some vendors from selling tobacco and in due course could reduce smoking rates. Currently, enforcement agencies have no way of knowing who is selling tobacco, and this compromises their ability to police current tobacco laws.

Licensing would mean that all tobacco vendors would face scrutiny.

Alcohol harm reduction

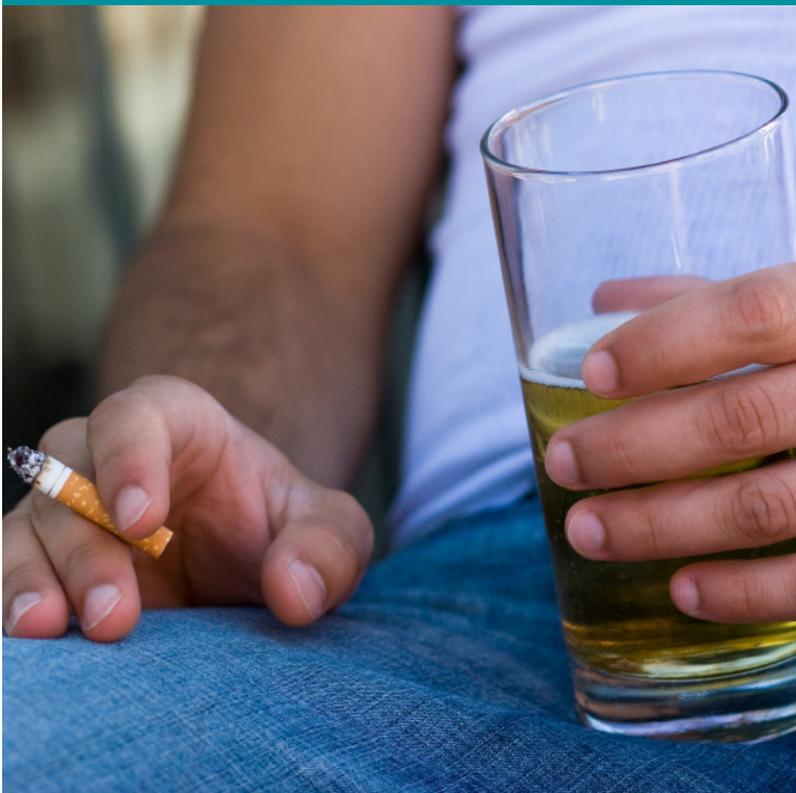
The risks of excessive alcohol consumption are significant. Increased alcohol consumption means a greater likelihood of injury, disease and death. Victoria needs to promote a culture of responsible drinking.

Ban alcohol-related shopper loyalty programs, reward schemes and free gifts in Victoria.

It is time to end alcohol advertisements on shopper dockets.

Alcohol advertising on the receipts of basic, non-alcoholic purchases normalises the culture of alcohol consumption, encourages irresponsible drinking and constitutes advertising to children.

If a child buys an apple, they should not be bombarded with a "2 for 1 sauvignon blanc" offer.





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