



Our ref: 060614-J

6 June 2014

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe
Secretary
Community Affairs Legislation Committee (Committee)

Via email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Radcliffe

Re: Inquiry into the Health Workforce Australia (Abolition) Bill 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Health Workforce Australia (Abolition) Bill 2014.

The APA understands that, on recommendation from the Commission of Audit, Health Workforce Australia (HWA) is to be merged with the Department of Health.

The APA submits that workforce reform was a key initiative by the HWA and that reform around extended scope of practice and physiotherapists working in emergency departments should continue when transfer of functions is assigned to the Department of Health.

Most significantly, HWA recently approved the health professionals prescribing pathway (HPPP).

The HPPP is intended to provide a nationally consistent approach to non-medical prescribing. HWA examined what steps health professionals would need to take to provide safe prescribing. HWA released two public consultation papers for feedback, held several forums on other health professionals prescribing and conducted consumer surveys on the topic.

The HPPP is a significant workforce enabler and the APA supports the continuation of this important project. The APA submits that if physiotherapists had prescribing rights (within their scope of practice), this would be of benefit to the Australian healthcare system by:

- reducing costs to the patient and taxpayer by eliminating unnecessary GP visits to obtain a script for medication;
- lessening the burden on GPs by allowing GPs to focus on treating patients;
- improving service to patients – less waiting time, more streamlined and connected service;
- speeding up interventions e.g. antibiotic provision, oxygen provision; and
- patients receiving treatment from experts in their field.

If you have any enquiries regarding any of the above, please feel free to contact Nada Martinovic, Senior Policy Advisor

Yours faithfully,

Cris Massis
Chief Executive Officer