

Effective Risk Management in Employee Relations



Reading time:
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Last Modified on 06/05/2024 11:19 am AEST

“to promote honourable and to discourage irregular practice”

MIPS has recently provided a webinar education session covering the subject of ‘Employee Relations ’ and this is available for review in the OnDemand area of the Education portal. The presentation included MIPS’ consideration when members seek assistance and also provided some key risk management messages and strategies as follows:

- As a member, your MIPS Members’ Indemnity Insurance policy responds to complaints, claims and investigations arising out of the provision of healthcare by you.
- Healthcare is defined as “any care, treatment, advice, service or goods provided in respect of the physical or mental health of your patient”. Thus, should your notification relate to healthcare, then the policy will respond in accordance with its ‘wording’.

If not, for non medical indemnity matters, MIPS can still consider requests for assistance under MIPS Protections. This is discretionary cover for non-healthcare matters related to your healthcare practice. It is granted in alignment with the MIPS Constitution “to promote honourable and to discourage irregular practice”. The majority of assistance for employee relations issues is provided by MIPS in this way.

Points to remember:

- Employee relation issues may affect your personal wellbeing (or that of your colleagues’) and lead to providing sub optimal patient care resulting in a subsequent complaint, claim or investigation.
- Employee relation matters need to be dealt with promptly and appropriately before they escalate unnecessarily and potentially out of your/MIPS’ control.
- Recognise workload stress or other issues in your life possibly affecting you.
- When you’ve been criticised or you’ve received a poor assessment, seek support – from HR, hospital advocate, trusted colleague, mentor or MIPS.
- Remember the importance of maintaining professionalism and your duty to your patients.
- Remember your AHPRA codes of conduct (applies to both medical and dental members).
 - 6. Working with other healthcare professionals:
 - 6.1 Good relationships with colleagues and other healthcare professionals strengthen the doctor-patient relationship and enhance patient care.
 - 8. Patient Safety and Minimising risk
 - 8.3 Doctor’s performance – you and your colleagues.
 - 11. Ensuring doctor’s health “As a doctor it is important for you to maintain your own health and wellbeing. This includes seeking an appropriate work-life balance.”

Do's and dont's

- Do not try to manage employee relation issues by yourself.
- Seek assistance from MIPS.
- It is important not to be too reactive and defensive.
- Cooperate with the resolution process, understand the issues and be prepared to accept criticism if warranted.
- May be best to attempt to compromise rather than escalate or try to fight an unwinnable situation.
- When appropriate often a ‘mea culpa’ may be required.
- Take expert advice even if you do not agree with it.

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