

A Message from Our Chief Medical Officer

Reading time:

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As yet another year draws to a close, it is timely to reflect on the year that was and some of the work that MIPS has been doing to support you in your practice.

Medico-legal issues – AI scribes

2024 has seen the rapid rise of AI scribes in clinical practice. Several software vendors have entered the Australian market over the last 12 months, offering products that integrate with existing electronic health record platforms. While AI scribes can reduce the administrative burden of clinical practice, there are important medicolegal issues to consider. I will be hosting an update webinar about AI scribes in early February 2025. You will be able to register for this webinar in the new year.

Here is a quick reminder of some of the important issues to consider:

- You must obtain consent before using an AI scribe to record a clinical encounter. Recording without consent may constitute a criminal offence in some jurisdictions.
- You must always check the accuracy of any AI-generated output. Unidentified errors could lead to patient harm or privacy breaches.
- Talk to software vendors before deciding whether to use an AI-scribe or before deciding which one might be right for you.
- Read the terms and conditions of any service agreement and seek advice before signing. It is important to understand whether data is stored and, if so, what data is stored where and for how long.

The [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency](#) and the [Royal Australian College of General Practitioners](#) have also released guidance on the use of AI scribes in clinical practice.

Risk Education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Throughout 2024, MIPS has been working hard to support both medical and dental practitioner members meet their CPD requirements by creating 41 hours of new CPD content. For medical practitioners, this includes education activities, measuring outcomes activities and reviewing performance activities, as well as program level requirements for professionalism and ethics. For dental practitioners, our content includes both clinical and non-clinical activities. As we approach 31 December 2024 and the end of another CPD year for medical practitioners, don't hesitate to check out MIPS' CPD offerings available [here](#).

Advocacy

A critical part of our work at MIPS is ensuring that we proactively represent the interests of our members when legal and regulatory reforms are proposed. 2024 has been a busy year, with MIPS contributing to discussion on a range of important issues, including:

- the permanent publication of some practitioners' Ahpra regulatory histories;
- NSW health sector funding;
- expedited specialist international medical graduate registration pathway;
- a new draft Ahpra Criminal History Standard;
- complexity within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme; and
- the safe and responsible AI in healthcare.

A common theme running through many our responses has been the critical need to ensure that there are appropriate safeguards in place so that, while regulation protects the public, it does not adversely and unreasonably impact on the overwhelming majority of health practitioners who do the right thing.

I was pleased to read the recent findings of the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman into vexatious notifications. While the review found evidence of the Ahpra notification process being weaponised by some notifiers, it recommended that Ahpra better identify and respond to vexatious notifications. The review also noted that delays and lack of communication about progress of notifications adds to practitioner distress. I believe that MIPS' strong advocacy in 2022 contributed to these findings, which I hope will lead to fairer and faster regulatory processes for members facing Ahpra notifications.

24/7 advisory services

One of the most important ways in which MIPS can support members is through the 24/7 advisory service. We strongly encourage members to contact us as soon as possible if you are aware of an incident that could give rise to a claim in the future, or if you need support and information navigating a complex medicolegal situation, or you just need reassurance. We are here 24/7 and always happy to assist. Throughout 2024, MIPS has received between 900 and 1,000 calls per month, demonstrating the value of the service.

Giving back

In 2023, MIPS established the Nichola Davis Scholarship in recognition of Dr Davis' contribution to medicine, including through her work with MIPS. The inaugural recipient of the scholarship, Kiara Bowater, is in her second year of the medical school program at the University of Queensland. Congratulations Kiara!

I also want to extend my personal gratitude to Mr Gary Speck AM for his exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication as Chair of the MIPS Board. Gary will step down from the MIPS Board on 31 December 2024. Over the last 9 years, Gary has guided MIPS with vision, integrity, and a deep commitment to protecting and supporting members. I am delighted to welcome Dr Bronwyn King AO, who will begin as Chair of the MIPS Board on 1 January 2025.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your ongoing membership of MIPS, and MIPS looks forward to continuing to advocate for you in 2025. I would like to wish you and your loved ones a restful year-end, and a happy new year.

Best wishes,
Dr Owen Bradfield
Chief Medical Officer
