

Realising the health benefits of safe work - a continuing professional education for primary care practitioners

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Background: General Practitioners complete around 91% of compensable certificates, and play a significant role in promoting the awareness of the health benefits of work. The Australasian Consensus Statement on the Health Benefits of Work developed by the Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM) has been endorsed by 100 organisations including the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). The Victorian WorkCover Authority and TAC has undertaken a program of work focussing on the delivery of a general practice education and awareness raising program.

Objectives: The objectives of the program were to; engage Medicare Locals to undertake a general practice education and awareness raising program, develop training materials for Medicare Local staff to undertake practice liaison visits, recruit and train General Practice peer educators to deliver in-practice education and develop and deliver content for continuing professional development events in selected Medicare Locals.

Methods: A suite of educational resources were developed and tailored to suit delivery in a General Practice setting. The Medicare Locals were targeted if they had high certification rates, the educational events were delivered in-practice settings and Principal findings The practice target was reached in all Medicare Locals, a total of 457 general practices across the five Medicare Locals were visited. The program was successful in raising awareness of the health benefits of work amongst GPs and practice staff.

Discussion: The education has given general practitioners the impetus to talk to patients early about the health benefits of work and has the potential for GPs to be more confident in their clinical management of compensable patients.

Conclusion: That the educational program continue with the Victorian WorkCover Authority and TAC working with key peak bodies and medical colleges to ensure education about the Health Benefits of Safe Work become a mandatory component of all GP postgraduate training.