



The Hon Jenny Mikakos
Victorian Minister for Health
Level 22, 50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000

Via Email: minister.health@health.vic.gov.au; jenny.mikakos@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Minister,

Re: Victorian Health Minister demands regulators act against Melbourne chiropractor

Friends of Science in Medicine (FSM) appreciated your comments in the media about this matter.

Our organisation was formed in 2011 to emphasise the importance of basing Australian health care on evidence, scientifically sound research and established scientific knowledge published in peer-reviewed journals of accepted standing. Valuing scientific rigor is especially important in an age where unsubstantiated health claims are rampant and scientific consensus is ‘imbalanced’ by the views of extremists. As of February 2019, FSM has more than 1200 leading scientists, clinicians, lawyers and consumer advocates as supporters.

We campaign against the unethical promotion of therapeutic goods and services to consumers. The former includes many complementary medicines, diagnostic tests and medical devices. The latter includes services offered by both registered and unregistered health professionals.

We have engaged with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the Chiropractic Board of Australia (CBA) about our concerns over several years. For example, in 2016 there was similar publicity about a Victorian chiropractor ([Ian Rossborough](#)) to the one you commented upon today (Andrew Arnold).

Subsequently, FSM attended and reported on a [stakeholder forum](#) held in Melbourne by AHPRA and CBA. At this forum, FSM noted that following extensive publicity about the “adjustment” of a neonate for the treatment of colic by Ian Rossborough, the CBA placed limitations on the scope of his practice. Yet many other chiropractors had identical promotion and practice. FSM asked, “If practice limitations were appropriate for Rossborough, why not for all chiropractors?”

AHPRA advised that the title protection model in the national registration scheme was established in response to the 2005 Productivity Commission research report of Australia’s health workforce and has minimal practice restrictions to facilitate a flexible and innovative workforce. The specific practice restrictions proposed by FSM could only be achieved through a legislative amendment, or a scope of practice registration standard, requiring approval by all health ministers at a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting.

FSM believes there is a leadership role for Victoria to get COAG to insist that AHPRA and its National Boards develop standards of practice to prohibit professional activities that lack evidence, are exploitive and potentially dangerous.



This would include prohibiting chiropractors from treating the unborn child and children under the age of 8 years, as does Sweden. It would include asking the National Boards to draw up a list of controversial therapies for consultation regarding possible prohibition. These could include craniosacral therapy used by Andrew Arnold and many other chiropractors and osteopaths; chelation and other intravenous therapy used by integrative medical practitioners; homeopathy used by both registered and unregistered practitioners and a variety of dubious diagnostic tests used by alternative practitioners.

I should be grateful if a meeting could be arranged at our mutual convenience so that I could discuss this proposal with you.

Sincerely,

Assoc Prof Ken Harvey AM, MBBS FRCPA

President, Friends of Science in Medicine

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