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Research Director
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Via email: lacsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

To the Research Director

Thank you for providing AMA Queensland with the opportunity to give feedback on the *Health and Other Legislation Bill 2016*.

AMA Queensland is the state's peak medical advocacy group, representing over 6000 medical practitioners across Queensland and throughout all levels of the health system. We have previously advocated publicly on issues of public health, vaccination and medical regulation. Our members take a very strong interest in these issues given their importance to the health system in Queensland.

AMA Queensland will limit its comments on this piece of legislation to those areas for which it has expertise:

Amendments to the *Public Health Act 2005*

AMA Queensland has been previously consulted on the amendment to allow health information to be disclosed for research purposes.

It is our understanding that the process outlined under s150A(1) is reflective of the current procedure for granting research approval after going through ethics and the research governance process. AMA Queensland has no concerns with this part of the *Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*. In regards to the example listed after 150A(2)(c), AMA Queensland is also pleased with this amendment. As this amendment was required due to issues arising as a result of next of kin not being able to consent to research on behalf of a person with impaired capacity, the direct reference to the Statutory Health Attorney should help clarify and simplify the matter in future cases.

AMA Queensland is also supportive of the amendments which allow schools to share student information with school immunisation providers.

General Practitioner Access to the Viewer

AMA Queensland welcomes moves that would allow a General Practitioners (GP) to access the Queensland Health *Viewer* database. Continuity of care is an important principle in the delivery of health in Australia and these amendments will help reduce fragmentation of care. However, our understanding is that GPs will only be able to view the database, without the ability to insert additional information.

AMA Queensland appreciates Queensland Health has concerns about patient privacy and that technical issues such as firewalls may complicate the matter. So while we welcome and support the

amendments which allow GPs to access the *Viewer*, we believe it is important that GPs be given the ability to upload data to the system as well.

One area where we believe this is particularly important is in end-of-life care. If a patient has an advanced health directive, or has completed a Statement of Choices, it is important that health practitioners working in the public hospital system have access to the most up-to-date version of that document, particularly given statistics that show only 14 percent of Australians die at home¹. If a patient updates this document at a GPs office, currently there is a convoluted as slow process that must be followed to ensure this information is reflected in the *Viewer*. If a GP was able to update this information directly, this would obviously simplify the process significantly and would ensure that a patient's wishes are followed.

We appreciate that this is currently out of the scope of the proposed legislation but we would like to ensure the Government understands the importance of working towards this goal.

In closing, AMA Queensland supports the amendments contained within the *Health and Other Legislation Bill 2016*. We believe these are common sense amendments and the bill is unlikely to be contentious.

If you require further information or assistance in this matter, please contact Mr Leif Bremermann, Senior Policy Advisor, on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Dr Chris Zappala
President
Australian Medical Association Queensland

¹ Swerissen, H and Duckett, S., 2014, Dying Well. Grattan Institute