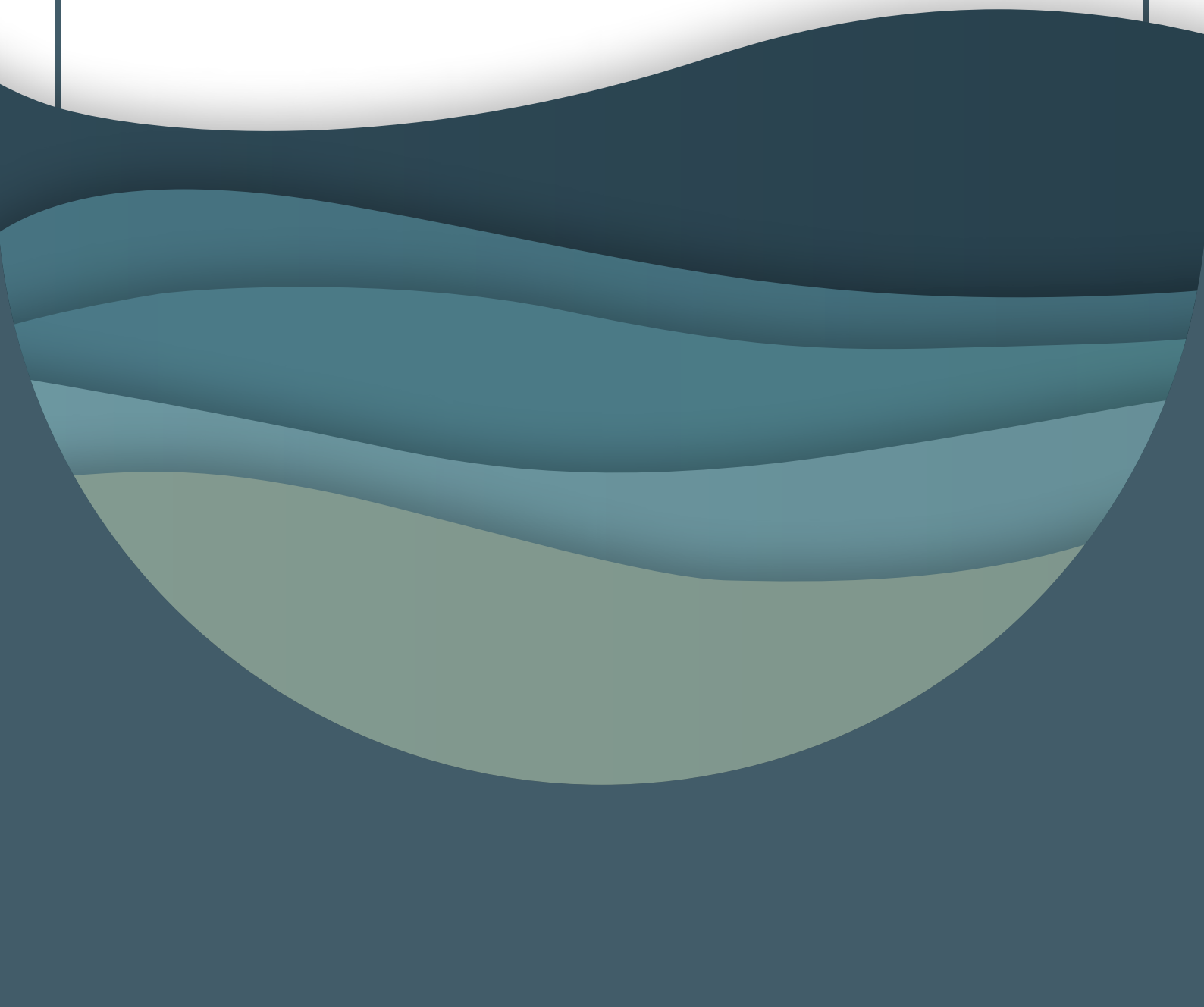


# **A WELLBEING CHARTER FOR DOCTORS**



# AIM

The Wellbeing Charter for Doctors aims to define wellbeing and describe the principles that guide the wellbeing of doctors in Australia and New Zealand. The Charter also describes the shared responsibility of wellbeing for the medical profession. The Charter demonstrates a unified approach to doctors' wellbeing so that we can advocate with one voice to institutions, governments and policy makers.

# DEFINITION

Wellbeing encompasses physical, mental, emotional and cultural health. It also includes the cultivation of healthy relationships at personal and professional levels based on appreciation, kindness, gratitude and compassion. At a professional level, these attributes are reflected in interactions with patients and the teams we work with and are at the heart of the competencies required for good medical practice.

# FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

- Maintaining wellbeing leads to the performance of high quality and effective health care delivery and optimises patient care.
- Doctors who maintain and maximise their health and wellbeing are able to manage the physical and emotional demands of medicine.
- Wellbeing is essential to achieving the competencies required for good medical practice.
- Wellbeing is beneficial to the individual and to the medical community in which doctors work.
- Jurisdictions, hospitals and medical colleges must support the wellbeing of doctors and provide an environment that is safe, accessible and inclusive for all.

# RESPONSIBILITY FOR WELLBEING

Almost all medical practitioners will face health and wellbeing challenges at different points in our career. Doctors' wellbeing is a priority for doctors, the patients that we serve and the teams that we work with. It is therefore a shared responsibility between individuals and system partners: workplaces, medical colleges, medical schools, regulators and quality improvement bodies.

## DOCTORS

1. Practise self care and continually evaluate what works best to thrive. This includes basic needs – adequate sleep, exercise, nutrition, hydration, regular breaks/ leave, setting boundaries and engaging in enriching activities that bring joy and purpose: e.g. learning, giving, hobbies, spiritual practice, mindfulness and social connection.
2. Have a General Practitioner and have regular check-ups.
3. Foster a personal network of support that may include colleagues, family and friends to share with in good and difficult times.
4. Are aware of and access professional support services that provide doctors with advice, a safe space to share concerns and assist with acute issues.
5. Acknowledge the benefits of kindness and compassion towards self, colleagues and patients.
6. Show compassion and encourage colleagues to seek help in difficult times.
7. Prepare in advance for the changes that punctuate a career in medicine.
8. Are aware that we are a role model to colleagues and the community.

## **COLLEAGUES**

1. Are aware of and sensitive to the needs of colleagues' lives – professional and non-professional.
2. Are prepared to support each other in times of need.

## **MANAGERS AND LEADERS**

1. Have an obligation to foster wellbeing.
2. Proactively discuss wellbeing at departmental or team meetings.
3. Ensure that there is a safe and supportive environment to confidentially discuss concerns with colleagues.
4. Have fluent processes to support and assist colleagues.

## **HOSPITALS AND JURISDICTIONS**

1. Have a role to support a work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible for all, including those with disabilities and chronic illness.
2. Have an obligation to provide a safe and healthy working environment including cover for sick leave, reasonable working hours and flexible work options.
3. Support doctors' wellbeing by creating a culture of care and compassion.
4. Have doctors' wellbeing at the core of healthcare strategy and leadership accountability, enabling compassionate leaders, measuring staff wellbeing regularly and confidentially, identifying and acting on risks including organisational factors, team factors and job design.
5. Provide practical and emotional support to teams and individuals.
6. Offer and promote targeted initiatives to enhance protective factors that affect overall wellbeing.

## MEDICAL COLLEGES

1. Provide doctors in training and specialist doctors with the knowledge and skills to support, encourage and sustain a safe working environment for all doctors through specialist training programs and continuing professional development.
2. Have an important role to advance doctors' wellbeing through advocacy, research, education, policy, support and evidence based initiatives.
3. Have wellbeing initiatives that are aligned and that actively support doctors throughout their careers.

