

05 April 2020

Hon. Steven Marshall MP
Premier of South Australia

BY EMAIL premier@sa.gov.au

Dear Hon. Steven Marshall MP,

Media Reports of Insurers Conduct re: Doctors and Covid-19 & Workers Compensation

It is with alarm and distress that SASMOA and its members have read media reports that insurers may be moving to exclude claims from health care workers resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic including, frontline doctors such as those working in our Emergency Departments and more specifically those who are working in the defined COVID-19 site, the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

It is SASMOA's strong position that such conduct, if it is occurring, is unconscionable and has the effect of significantly undermining the confidence of frontline medical staff at this critical time. We are confident we do not need to emphasise to your government that the need to support the medical workforce has never been higher and SASMOA members should not have to worry that they, or their families, will not be covered financially for the loss of income or medical expenses as a result of contracting the disease.

Further, a doctor (or indeed any health care worker) functioning on the frontline and their families should also be protected as much as possible under the State's workers compensation laws should they contract COVID-19. To protect frontline doctors will require amendments to the current workers compensation legislation, the *Return to Work Act, 2014*. These requested amendments would include that COVID-19 if contracted by a health care worker, would be presumed (deemed injuries) to have occurred when the health care worker was undertaking their duties whilst at the hospital.

Additionally, senior frontline doctors, earn above the current articulated average weekly earnings cap, and to adequately compensate frontline doctors for loss of income arising from contracted COVID-19 in their work setting, amendments to the necessary section will be required to ensure no disadvantage to the frontline doctor or their immediate family.

SASMOA members need to be assured that while they are supporting the people of South Australia, the government of South Australia will be doing



**SA Salaried Medical
Officers Association**

ABN: 60 932 342 397



**Australian Salaried
Medical Officers
Federation
(SA Branch)**

ABN: 23 172 174 608

1st Floor, 161 Ward Street
(PO Box 64)
North Adelaide
South Australia 5006

Telephone: (08) 8267 5151

Fax: (08) 8267 1891

Email: sasmoa@sasmoa.com

Website: sasmoa.com

everything in its power in supporting them. South Australian doctors in South Australian hospitals (or wherever they support our community) must know we are all united in supporting their vital role.

SASMOA calls on you, as Premier, to urgently address this matter and support South Australia's doctors.

The writer is available to meet with you and progress these changes as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BM', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bernadette Mulholland
SASMOA, Senior Industrial Officer

C.C. Minister for Health and Wellbeing