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Media Statement

Continuity of patient care – why it matters now.

These days, many health consumers don't have a regular GP and are likely to engage with doctors and other health professionals in a range of healthcare settings, including hospitals and specialist clinics. But who is responsible for the patient?

In situations where doctors communicate poorly, fail to follow up, or miss important details in medical records and handover notes, a patient's quality of care can be compromised.

In recent years, the NSW Medical Council has seen a number of complaints in which communication failures between a doctor and others involved in a patient's care has led to adverse events that could have been avoided.

In the Council's [latest podcast](#), host Dr Annette Pantle is joined by industry experts to discuss practical steps every doctor can take to avoid the risks associated with fragmented care and ensure quality care for their patients.

Professor Anne Duggan, Chief Medical Officer at the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, says "We live in a modern world where there's fantastic healthcare and we've achieved that by specialising... but there's a price to be paid for that if we don't manage it, and that is that health care becomes split up."

Medicolegal advisor at MDA National and podcast guest, Dr Kiely Kim, suggests "When there isn't a central coordinator or a shared health record, we can see things being missed."

Dr Liz Marles, GP and Clinical Director at the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, says every medical record "needs to include an impression of what we think is going on so that [other doctors] can see what the plan for follow up is."

While the podcast episode highlights the important role a patient's primary GP plays in coordinating care, it also emphasises the role every medical practitioner involved in the care of a patient – including specialists – should play in ensuring continuity of care.

Listen to the full episode: [When a patient has other doctors: three things you can do to ensure continuity of care](#).

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Please attribute to a spokesperson for the Medical Council of NSW.