

‘We need more role models’ - Medical students call for greater disability representation and support in the healthcare world

The Australian Medical Students Association (AMSA) calls for medical schools and healthcare systems across the nation to actively support students and professionals with disabilities.

Considering almost 20% of Australians have reported to have a disability [1], the current healthcare systems are lacking the protocols and resources to adequately address the various challenges encountered by medical students and health professionals.

“The bottom line is our current approach is not good enough. We are leaving an important part of the population behind, which is unacceptable. We need to see the appropriate pathways for more students and professionals with disabilities in healthcare. We need more role models,” said Jasmine Davis, President of AMSA.

The challenges facing those with disabilities in healthcare professions start as early as entrance into medical education programs.

“Currently, most universities do not have a Disability Entry Pathway into medicine. Once a student is accepted, there are subsequent challenges in completing their degree. There needs to be a more active exploration of solutions to support students with a disability. Each person and their situation are unique, and their needs and potential can only be considered on an individual basis.”

Where there are medical students and doctors with disabilities in the workforce, the current systems in place fail to adequately address concerns such as accessibility to ramps and elevators. Indeed, these calls for more purposeful inclusion will be amplified in this afternoon’s session at the 2022 AMSA National Convention with Dr Dinesh Palipana and Jimmy Jan.

“Inclusion in medicine is important for so many reasons, including creating a better healthcare system for people with disability by embedding those with lived experience within it,” said Jimmy Jan, current medical student, Ambassador for Wings for Life and the 2022 AMSA Disability & Inclusion

“There still remain barriers for people with a disability in the system with medical schools, employers and specialist training colleges,” said Dr Dinesh Palipana, a quadriplegic Australian doctor, lawyer, scientist and disability advocate. Officer.

Dr Dinesh Palipana and Jimmy Jan are keynote speakers at the AMSA 2022 National Convention. AMSA is the peak representative body for Australia’s 17,000 medical students.

References:

1. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/publications/national-inquiry-employment-and-disability-issues-paper-1>

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