

Media release

16 January 2012

National regulation begins July 2012 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners

Registration standards practitioners must meet released today

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (the Board) today released the mandatory registration standards that practitioners must meet to register under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, which comes into effect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners on 1 July 2012.

The Board reminds practitioners that:

- from 1 July 2012, in order to use the titles *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner*, *Aboriginal Health Practitioner* or *Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner* practitioners must be registered
- only those people who are required by their employer to use these titles will need to be registered to continue working after 1 July 2012
- Aboriginal health workers currently registered in the Northern Territory will automatically transfer to the National Scheme
- after 1 July 2012, those practitioners who are not required by their employer to use these protected titles will not be required to be registered, and will be able to keep working using their existing titles (ie *Aboriginal Health Worker*, *Drug and Alcohol Worker* and *Mental Health Worker*).
- all other practitioners who meet the Board's standards may also choose to be registered, and
- to register on time practitioners are advised to complete their application by 30 March 2012.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia Chair Peter Pangquee said mandatory national registration standards that practitioners must meet, no matter where they work in Australia, have now been set and were approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 13 January 2012.

"These standards set out requirements in continuing professional development, criminal history, English language skills, professional indemnity insurance and recency of practice. In addition, the Board has developed a grand-parenting standard, a standard for eligibility for registration and the requirement that

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health practitioners need to be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person,” Mr Pangquee said.

“I urge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners across Australia to visit the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia website to read the mandatory national registration standards.

“These national standards have been set following extensive consultation with practitioners and key stakeholders. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners will need to take the steps necessary to meet the new national standards to be registered to practise on 1 July 2012,” he said.

Under the National Scheme, National Boards set the policies and standards to regulate the professions and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) supports the National Boards in their role to protect the public, providing key services which include registering practitioners and investigating complaints or notifications.

While the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) for this profession takes effect from 1 July 2012 (and practitioners must ensure that they are registered by this date in order to practise), the Board strongly recommends that practitioners submit their completed registration application by 30 March 2012. This is to allow enough processing time before 1 July.

Aboriginal Health Workers currently registered in the Northern Territory will be advised by letter about how their current registration translates into registration under the National Scheme.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice is one of four health professions that will join the National Scheme on 1 July 2012 under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, medical radiation practice and occupational therapy will join the 10 professions already in the scheme.

The National Board's website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au is updated regularly and has a host of information to make transition to the National Scheme as easy and as smooth as possible.

“AHPRA staff are also able to help practitioners move towards national registration and can be contacted by phoning 1300 419 495 or by making an online inquiry,” Mr Pangquee said.

Important dates

16 January 2012	Mandatory registration standards for the four new professions released – these are the standards all practitioners must meet to register and be able to practise next year
February 2012	Registration applications available for downloading from Board websites
30 March 2012	Practitioners urged to have submitted their completed registration application by this date, to allow for processing time

1 July 2012	New professions join National Scheme – all practitioners must be registered with their National Board to practise
30 November 2012 onwards	Registered health practitioner annual renewal date

For more information

- Visit www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au for a FAQ on transfer to the National Scheme
- Visit www.ahpra.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200