

Communiqué

Seventh meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

22 & 23 February 2012

At its first meeting for 2012, the Board considered a wide range of issues including accreditation, delegations, communication with stakeholders and registration matters.

This Communiqué aims to inform stakeholders and registrants of the progress in the work of the National Board.

Update on registration standards

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council has approved the Board's mandatory registration standards and the Board's two additional registration standards on grandparenting and the requirement that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners must be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. These final standards are now available on the Board's website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au.

Registration applications now open

Registration applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners are now open along with applications for the other three professions joining the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme on 1 July.

Applications forms are available on the Board's website. Practitioners who are required to register (see dot points below) are strongly encouraged to submit their application form by 30 March to allow plenty of time for processing.

The Board reminds practitioners that:

- from 1 July 2012, practitioners must be registered in order to use the protected titles *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner*, *Aboriginal health practitioner* or *Torres Strait Islander health practitioner*
- if you are a registered Aboriginal Health Worker in the Northern Territory on 30 June 2012, you will automatically be registered as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner on 1 July 2012. You will need to be registered to continue working in a clinical role in the Northern Territory
- those people not in the Northern Territory who are required by their employer to use these protected titles will also need to be registered to continue working after 1 July 2012
- 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 (e.g. *Aboriginal Health Worker*, *Drug and Alcohol Worker* or *Mental Health Worker*), and
- other practitioners who meet the Board's standards may choose to be registered but will not have to register by 1 July 2012.

Registration Fees

The Board has set its general registration fees for 2012–2013 and is now working on setting the fees for other categories of registration including limited and provisional registration. Details of the Board's registration fees are now available on the Board's website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au.

Communication

The Board is keenly aware of the mounting interest among both registered and unregistered practitioners in the requirements of the National Law from 1 July 2012. A comprehensive communications plan has been developed and is being implemented across the country.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are now available on the Board's website and Board members have been providing regular presentations on national registration at forums and meetings across the country, and will continue to do so in the lead up to national registration. The Board has also produced and distributed posters.

Update on codes and guidelines

The Board considered feedback from the recent consultation on a code of conduct and guidelines on advertising and mandatory reporting and has agreed on the final code and guidelines.

The Board is now considering feedback on its draft guidelines on recency of practice, grandparenting and continuing professional development. Public consultation on these guidelines opened on 27 January and closed on 1 March 2012. A copy of the draft guidelines is available on the Board's website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au.

Accreditation

One of the key objectives of the National Law is to facilitate the provision of high quality education and training of health practitioners. The Board's accreditation function is the primary way of achieving this. The Board has agreed to appoint a committee of the Board to carry out its accreditation functions and the National Law defines the respective roles of the Board and its appointed accreditation authority. The Board is currently seeking comment on what the composition of this committee should be. Once again details are available on the Board's website and submissions can be lodged until 15 March 2012.

General matters

The Board's website has received an increase in traffic over the past three months indicating that there is a high demand for accurate information. Further information about the obligations under the national scheme for practitioners and the work of the Board can be accessed through the website, www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au, or by calling 1300 419 495.

Peter Pangquee
Chair
2 March 2012