

Communiqué

May 2017 meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

Introduction

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (the Board) works in partnership with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to implement the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). Details about individual Board members can be found on the Board's [website](#).

The Board's most recent quarterly meeting was held on 24 May 2017, in Darwin. The whole Board meets as the Registration and Notification Committee (RNC) almost monthly to consider registration and notification (complaint) matters.

We publish this communiqué on our website. Please forward it to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

May meeting

During its meeting on 24 May, the Board received reports from the RNC. It also addressed a number of AHPRA and National Scheme-related matters.

Supporting better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

At their combined meeting in September 2016, National Boards, AHPRA and accreditation authorities discussed how to best work together to support better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. AHPRA, the National Boards, accreditation authorities and other stakeholders then held their first workshop in February.

The goal of the workshop was to begin the work of developing a National Registration Accreditation Scheme's strategy in ensuring patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's health system.

The session involved 23 attendees, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and representatives from accreditation entities, National Boards, AHPRA and the Chair of AHPRA's Agency Management Committee.

The group agreed that a strategy should ensure patient safety and focus on:

- Building a culturally safe registered health workforce and be leaders in achieving workforce outcomes to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the registered health workforce, and
- Support greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's access to the National Scheme by:
 - understanding how indigenous communities access the scheme, and
 - coordinating a consistent approach across the scheme in building access and participation.

Given the enormous progress that is still needed to 'close the gap' on indigenous health, this is a very important initiative for AHPRA and the National Scheme more widely.

The next workshop to progress this important work will be held in June.

Review of registration standards

Once again, we report to you that the Board has completed the preliminary consultation phase of its review of registration standards in conjunction with the other National Boards that started under the National Scheme in 2012. The registration standards that are being reviewed are:

- professional indemnity insurance arrangements (PII)
- continuing professional development (CPD)
- recency of practice (RoP)
- English language skills, and
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander registration standard.

The next phase of the process is public consultation and we will seek the feedback of all interested parties, as well as those trusted stakeholders who gave us useful feedback during the preliminary consultation phase.

The Board is keen to get your feedback on the proposed draft changes to the registration standards (some changes are small, some are major).

In the meantime, the currently published registration standards remain in force.

Review of the Code of Conduct

The Board's Code of conduct (the Code) is also used by ten other National Boards (Chinese Medicine, Chiropractic, Dental, Medical Radiation Practice, Occupational Therapy, Optometry, Osteopathy, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Podiatry), with some minor profession-specific changes for some Boards.

The Code is a regulatory document that provides an overarching guide to support and inform good practice and to help practitioners, National Boards, employers, health care users and other stakeholders to understand what good practice involves. It seeks to help and support practitioners to deliver safe and effective health services in an ethical framework.

As the Code was last published in March 2014, the Board has started a scheduled review with other National Boards that use the Code, which will draw on best available research and data and involve additional stakeholder consultation and engagement.

The review is still at an early research phase. However, the Board is already considering how it can maximise opportunities for input when the consultation stage of the review starts. In addition to public consultation, the Board intends to use its website and social media to inform the profession of how it can contribute to the review.

The Board will highlight opportunities to be involved in upcoming communiqué and newsletters.

Meeting your legal and professional advertising obligations

Registered health practitioners, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners, who advertise health services need to **check, correct** and **comply** with their professional and legal advertising obligations.

Although most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners work for someone, rather than work in their own businesses, the National Law extends to **all advertisers**, including registered health practitioners.

Under the National Law, a regulated health service or a business providing a regulated health service must not advertise in a way that:

- is false, misleading or deceptive
- uses gifts, discounts or inducements without explaining the terms and conditions of the offer

- uses a testimonial or a purported testimonial
- creates an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment, and/or
- directly or indirectly encourages the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of regulated health services.

There are also restrictions on advertising in a way that identifies a health practitioner as a specialist when they do not hold registration as a specialist or as an endorsed practitioner in a health profession.

The National Boards and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) have published a strategy for the National Scheme aimed at keeping health service consumers safe from misleading advertising.

The [Advertising compliance and enforcement strategy](#) explains how National Boards and AHPRA will manage advertising complaints and compliance, including the regulatory powers available to deal with breaches of the National Law.

The strategy is designed to keep improving how regulated health services are advertised so healthcare consumers can be better informed.

When preparing advertising, advertisers should always put the consumer first and ensure that their advertising is not [false, misleading or deceptive](#) in any way.

This strategy builds on the previous education and enforcement work from National Boards and AHPRA.

More information is available on the [Advertising resources](#) section of the AHPRA website and more information will be published in coming months.

Health practitioner regulation: Learn how you're protected

A new video and an accompanying infographic explains the Australia-wide scheme that is in place to protect members of the public.

Both resources are available on the [What we do](#) page of the AHPRA website or read the [news item](#) on the Board website for more information. The video can also be watched on AHPRA's [YouTube channel](#).

Employer obligations

If you employ registered health practitioners, you have an important obligation to ensure that they hold current registration and that you understand your mandatory notification requirements under the National Law.

AHPRA has published [resources](#) to help you understand and meet your obligations, which are designed to complement your recruitment requirements and processes. These materials state exactly what your obligations are and it is important that you are familiar with them.

Registration

Approved programs of study

There are now twelve programs of study that have been approved by the Board for the purposes of registration. More are coming on line as they are accredited and approved by the Board. The list of [approved programs of study](#) is published on the Board's website.

If you have any questions, please call the Board's Executive Officer, Jill Humphreys, on (03) 8708 9066.

Top tips for using the register

The [national register of practitioners](#) is core to all the work of the Board, as it provides up-to-date information about every registered health practitioner. To help the public and employers get the most out of the register, we have developed [these tips](#). In particular, the tips remind anyone responsible for recruiting health practitioners how to use the register to verify a practitioner's registration status.

New accreditation publications about costs and international accreditation systems

Two new papers have been published about key aspects of the accreditation functions under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

The papers provide a new analysis of accreditation costs and an international comparison of accreditation systems for registered health professions in comparable health systems.

To read more about the papers, visit the [news item](#) on the AHPRA website.

COAG Health Council Meeting Communiqué

The Federal and state and territory Health Ministers met in Melbourne on 24 March 2017 at the [COAG Health Council](#) to discuss a range of national health issues. The meeting was chaired by the Victorian Minister for Health, the Hon Jill Hennessy. AHPRA CEO, Martin Fletcher, attended the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (the Council) meeting which brings together all Health Ministers throughout Australia to provide oversight for the work of the National Accreditation and Registration Scheme (the National Scheme). AHPRA and National Boards provide a regular update to the Council on our work.

This meeting had a particular focus on the progress of amendments to the National Law which among other things will pave the way for the registration of paramedics from 2018 and a call for expressions of interest and nominations for first appointments to the National Board before this. Ministers also discussed further amendments to the National Law to increase the penalties for people holding out as registered practitioners.

The Council produces a Communiqué from its meeting which can be accessed on [AHPRA's website](#).

Are your contact details up to date?

It's important to make sure that your contact details registered with AHPRA are up to date so you don't miss reminders to renew or important information from the Board. You can check your contact details via the [Login icon](#) at the top right of the AHPRA website.

Email accounts need to be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

If you cannot remember your user ID or password, contact us [online](#) or call 1300 419 495.

Security tip: keep your web browser updated

AHPRA and the National Boards have made changes to our websites to ensure your information is kept safe.

If you use Internet Explorer version 6 (or an older version) to view the Board's website and are experiencing difficulty accessing web pages and online services, the Board recommends you [upgrade to the newest version of Internet Explorer immediately](#). It is available for free from Microsoft.

If you are using a new version of Internet Explorer and are still having difficulty accessing our website please contact us to report your experience. Call **1300 419 495** Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

Registration opens for CLEAR

The Fifth International Congress on Professional and Occupational Regulation will be held this November in Melbourne, Australia. Join regulatory stakeholders from around the world as they share global perspectives on licensure and regulation.

Additional information the conference, including how to register, is on the AHPRA [website](#).

AHPRA and Medical Board note Senate report

AHPRA and the Medical Board of Australia have noted the [report](#) of the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs into complaints management. AHPRA and MBA will consider the Senate's 14 recommendations.

Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners on its [website](#). Practitioners are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policies and guidelines affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island health practitioners.

For more information about registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme please refer to the information published on www.ahpra.gov.au. Alternatively, contact AHPRA by an [online enquiry form](#) or phone 1300 419 495.

Follow AHPRA on social media

Connect with AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to receive information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



Conclusion

We publish a range of information about registration and our expectations of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners on our website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more information or help with questions about your registration please send a web enquiry form or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Bruce Davis

Presiding Member

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

30 May 2017