



Communiqué

10 September 2013

The Pharmacy Board of Australia met on 30 August 2013 in Melbourne, during the 2013 National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme) combined meeting.

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme combined meeting

All 14 National Boards in the National Scheme held their meetings on 30 August 2013 to coincide with the National Scheme combined meeting. The AHPRA Agency Management Committee, AHPRA leadership teams, representatives of NSW Councils, accreditation authorities, Health Workforce Australia and regulatory colleagues from New Zealand joined Board members for a series of presentations and workshops. The purpose of this annual meeting was to take stock, share ideas and innovations, identify future challenges and identify actions to continue making improvements to the implementation of the national scheme.

Standards compliance audit

AHPRA and the National Boards are developing a nationally-consistent approach to auditing health practitioners' compliance with mandatory registration standards. In 2012, the first phase of the pilot audit was conducted with the pharmacy profession and a subsequent pilot undertaken with Pharmacy, Optometry and Chiropractic professions. A public report is now available on the audit page of the AHPRA [website](#).

Details of the audit of pharmacists registered between 1 December 2012 and 30 November 2013 will be published on the AHPRA website once finalised.

Paracetamol

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has advised on its [website](#) that the maximum paracetamol pack size to be sold in Australian retailers other than in pharmacies has changed from twenty-five to twenty. From 1 September 2013, this change will be fully implemented. Smaller packs of paracetamol in pharmacies may contain 20 tablets instead of 24 tablets.

TGA advised:

"Paracetamol can cause serious liver damage if taken in high doses.

The decision to decrease the pack size was made after considering the risks of different pack sizes in Australia. It is expected that this decision will result in fewer people requiring medical intervention following a paracetamol overdose."

The evidence considered and the reasons for the scheduling change outlined in the [Poison Standard](#) (SUSMP) is also outlined on the TGA [website](#).

Given the serious risk associated with high doses of paracetamol, the Board expresses serious concern about the decision of some pharmacists to make paracetamol available for purchase in "dump bins" noting the larger pack sizes are typically made available in this way and are freely available in the same way as non-medicinal items. Pharmacists have a professional obligation to ensure that the sale of Schedule 2 poisons (Pharmacy Medicines) and Schedule 3 poisons (Pharmacist Only Medicines) to members of the public includes the provision of appropriate advice.

The Board therefore believes that it is inappropriate to promote the sale of scheduled medicines by “dump binning”, particularly when there is a well known record of presentations to hospital accident and emergency departments from misuse of paracetamol.

Consultations

The Board is currently reviewing its registration standards, Code of Conduct and guidelines for pharmacists in preparation for consultation. Stakeholders and the public will be provided with an opportunity to provide feedback on any proposed changes.

The Board, together with other National Boards will soon be commencing public consultation on the following two registration standards common to all National Boards:

- English Language Skills Registration Standard (largely common), and
- Criminal History Registration Standard (common).

Other registration standards and guidelines, including:

- *Recency of practice registration standard*
- *Continuing professional development registration standard* and guidelines, and
- *Professional Indemnity Insurance arrangements registration standard*

will be progressively published for consultation on the Board’s website later in the year.

Stephen Marty
Chair
10 September 2013