



Communiqué

29 September 2015

The Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board) met on 18 September 2015 in Melbourne.

Meeting with the Australian Pharmacy Council

The president and senior staff of the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) met with the Board to discuss work carried out by APC on behalf of the Board.

Under the National Law¹ which established the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, the Board determined that the accreditation function for the pharmacy profession is to be exercised by APC. The accreditation agreement between the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and APC facilitates the collaboration between APC, AHPRA and the Board.

In addition to developing and reviewing accreditation standards for pharmacy degree programs and intern training programs, APC assesses programs of study and education providers against the standards, manages the assessment process for overseas pharmacists and conducts the written examination component of the Board's registration examination for intern pharmacists.

Online renewal of registration is now open

Online renewal of registration is now open for pharmacists registered in Australia. Pharmacists who are due to renew their general or non-practising registration with the Board by 30 November can apply online now.

Earlier this month the Board announced that it had limited the fee increase to below the national CPI of 1.3% for the registration period from 1 December 2015 to 30 November 2016. A [fee schedule](#), including the fee arrangements for practitioners whose principal place of practice is NSW², is published on the Board's website.

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) is funded by practitioners' registration fees and there is no cross subsidisation between professions.

A series of reminders to renew are being sent to practitioners by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), on behalf of the Board. The email reminders include a link to [online renewal](#).

Earlier this month, the Board published information on its [website](#) reminding pharmacists to update their contact details to ensure future email and hard copy reminders to renew registration. Pharmacists who do not have their user ID can complete an [online enquiry form](#) and select 'Online Services - Practitioner' as the category type. Some pharmacists may also need to [reset their password](#).

Under the National Law, registered health practitioners are responsible for renewing their registration on time each year.

Last year 97.6 per cent of all health practitioner registration renewals due by 30 November (12 professions) were submitted online, an increase of 1.3 per cent.

¹ The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law)

² New South Wales is a co-regulatory jurisdiction and does not participate in the health, performance and conduct process provided by the National Law, but is involved in other parts of the National Scheme. The [health professionals councils](#) work with the [Health Care Complaints Commission](#) to assess and manage concerns about practitioners' conduct, health and performance in NSW.

Useful information for pharmacists is on the Board's website:

[Registration standards](#)

[Registration renewal](#)

[Renewal FAQ](#)

Publication of revised guidelines for pharmacists

On 2 September the Board published revised guidelines that provide guidance to the profession on a range of issues.

Pharmacists are urged to read the revised guidelines:

- *Guidelines for dispensing of medicines*
- *Guidelines on practice-specific issues*
 - *Guideline 1 Reference texts for pharmacists*
- *Guidelines on dose administration aids and staged supply of dispensed medicines, and*
- *Guidelines for proprietor pharmacists.*

The guidelines were subject to wide-ranging consultation and will take effect on 7 December 2015. They have been published now so pharmacists can become familiar with their content before implementation.

Obvious changes included renaming the titles of guidelines to better reflect content, and restructuring of some of the guidelines for ease of reading.

Pharmacists are expected to review the new guidelines and familiarise themselves with all changes to ensure they comply in their practice from 7 December.

Under section 41 of the National Law, Board guidelines can be used in disciplinary proceedings under the National Law or law of a co-regulatory jurisdiction, as evidence of what constitutes appropriate professional conduct or practice for pharmacists.

When considering notifications (complaints) against pharmacists, the Board may give consideration to whether a breach to Board guidelines has taken place.

Refer to the Board's [website](#) for details of some of the changes to the guidelines. A copy of the revised guidelines can be accessed on the Board's website under [Codes, Guidelines and Policies](#).

New RACGP guide on prescribing benzodiazepines

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has released a new guide for general practitioners on prescribing benzodiazepines, focusing on patient-centred care, accountable prescribing and harm reduction. Also available is a clinical governance framework for prescribing drugs of dependence in general practice, which provides practices with principles, strategies and tools in relation to prescribing drugs of dependence. These guides, which may be of value to pharmacists in their practice, are available on the [RACGP website](#).

Changes to Medicines Australia code of conduct affecting pharmacists

Pharmacists should be aware of changes to Medicines Australia's code of conduct. Medicines Australia is a membership organisation for pharmaceutical companies in Australia. Its code of conduct sets standards for the advertising and promotion of prescription medicines and applies to all member organisations.

The revised code requires member companies to publicly disclose payments made to health professionals for their expert service or when financial support is provided for education purposes, including airfares, accommodation and conference registration fees.

The new requirements in the code come into effect on 1 October 2015 and reporting of all payments will be mandatory from 1 October 2016. More information is available on the [Medicines Australia](#) website.

Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for pharmacists on its website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au.

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

William Kelly
Chair, Pharmacy Board of Australia
29 September 2015

[The Pharmacy Board of Australia](#) is the regulator of pharmacists in Australia and acts to protect the public by ensuring that suitably qualified and competent pharmacists are registered. The Board is responsible for developing registration standards, codes and guidelines for pharmacists and managing notifications (complaints) about pharmacists and pharmacy students. The Board does this through its powers under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory, and the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The Board's work in regulating Australia's pharmacists in the public interest is underpinned by [regulatory principles](#), which encourage a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation.*

**Except in NSW and QLD which have co-regulatory arrangements.*