

Communiqué

8 May 2019

The Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board) meets each month to consider and decide on any matters related to its regulatory function under the National Law¹ and within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

This communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board and matters regarding the National Scheme. Please forward it on to colleagues and employees who may be interested in its content.

Meeting with the National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association

The Board met with National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) representatives.

The NAPSA representatives presented the results of the annual National Pharmacy Student Survey (NPSS), and discussed with the Board matters of importance to students, as identified through the survey. The Board values the opportunity to engage NAPSA and continues to work closely on matters of mutual interest.

Public and stakeholder feedback on pharmacist prescribing

On 4 March 2019, the Board released a discussion paper to seek public and stakeholder feedback on the potential for pharmacist prescribing.

The Board was pleased to receive over 30 submissions from a range of stakeholders including pharmacist member organisations, government departments, medical practitioner organisations, consumer organisations, hospitals and individual pharmacists.

A range of views were expressed in the submissions, where possible, submissions will be published on the Board's website shortly.

As outlined in the discussion paper, the next steps will be to review the feedback with a view to publishing a report about the feedback. If necessary, the Board will seek clarification or more information from organisations and individuals who made a submission. It is too early to advise a publication date for the report but further updates will be provided as soon as possible.

The report is expected to provide further helpful information about:

- any additional work to be carried out by the profession if seeking to pursue one or more models of prescribing
- any further evidence to be gathered if sustainable prescribing models in the public interest are supported
- the roles of the profession and stakeholders in progressing any next steps, and
- any proposed regulatory work that would need to be completed to support any proposals, including whether the Board would be required to progress any proposals to the Ministerial Council.

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

The report to be published is to inform all interested parties about the views articulated in the broad range of submissions. The Board will not be determining whether proposals for prescribing by pharmacists will proceed as these are decisions taken by governments. However, the Board will continue to engage with the profession, government and stakeholders about any pharmacist prescribing proposals to discuss pertinent issues that must be addressed to ensure that the public is protected.

Pharmacist audits

The process for the audit of pharmacists' compliance with the Board's registration standards is outlined on the Board's [website](#).

The outcomes of the 2017-18 audit of pharmacists are reported in the Board's 2017-18 annual report summary which can be accessed on the AHPRA [website](#). (See Figure 1 below)

AHPRA conducts regular audits of randomly selected health practitioners across all professions on behalf of the National Boards. Audits provide assurance that practitioners are meeting the registration requirements for their profession. During an audit, a practitioner is required to provide evidence in support of the declarations they made in their previous year's registration renewal application.

In 2017/18, AHPRA audited 7,193 practitioners across all 15 regulated health professions.

For all audits initiated and completed in 2017-18, 97.2 per cent of pharmacists were found to have complied with the registration standards being audited. The Board acknowledges the results of the audit as an indication that pharmacists understand and are meeting their obligations outlined in registration standards.

Figure 1: Audit outcomes for the pharmacy profession



All Boards have adopted an educational approach to conducting audits, seeking to balance the protection of the public with the use of appropriate regulatory force to manage those practitioners found to be less than fully compliant with the audited standards.

Since AHPRA began conducting audits in 2012, the majority of practitioners audited have been found to comply with registration standards. About 3 per cent of those audited have either surrendered their registration or moved to non-practising registration while being audited. Analysis of the circumstances of those practitioners demonstrates two clear groups:

- practitioners residing overseas, and
- those no longer practising but maintaining registration.

Accessing appropriate reference texts during practice

Guideline 1 of the Board's *Guidelines on practice-specific issues*, which are published on the Board's [website](#), outline that access to contemporary references is essential to the practice

of pharmacy. The Board has published the *List of reference texts for pharmacists* on the website.

Current editions of the listed references in the form of a published document (hard copy) or via electronic means, such as computer, must be readily accessible and should be accessed by pharmacists during the clinical assessment, reviewing, dispensing and counselling processes.

With the recent announcement by Therapeutic Guidelines Limited that the print versions of the Therapeutic Guidelines series will no longer be available, pharmacists, proprietors and managers need to ensure that the electronic versions are obtained to ensure ongoing access to current information. Further information can be obtained from the publisher and suppliers about accessing updated content.

Additional reference texts may also be required to suit the practice setting to support pharmacists to deliver pharmacy services. An example of this is the compounding of medicines. The *Guidelines on compounding medicines* includes examples of additional texts about compounding that may be relevant in practice.

From time-to-time, pharmacy premises regulators report that deficiencies in the required list of reference texts were identified by inspectors and pharmacists were directed to update their references in accordance with the guidance published by the Board. Pharmacists need to be vigilant about maintaining access to up-to-date information to support their practice. In the case of pharmacy proprietors, the Board's *Guidelines for proprietor pharmacists* also outline the obligation of proprietors to ensure this occurs.

The mandatory list of reference texts is available under [Codes, Guidelines and Policies on the Board's website](#).

Have your say: How should we define 'cultural safety'?

AHPRA, the National Boards and Accreditation Authorities in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) which regulates registered health practitioners in Australia have partnered with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders and the National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF) to release a [public consultation](#).

Together, they are seeking feedback on a proposed definition of 'cultural safety' to develop an agreed, national baseline definition that can be used as a foundation for embedding cultural safety across all functions in the National Scheme and for use by the National Health Leadership Forum.

In total, there are 44 organisations represented in this consultation, which is being coordinated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group (the Strategy Group), which is convened by AHPRA, and the NHLF.

The consultation is a continuation of the work by the National Scheme's Strategy Group that has achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as its overall goal. Members of the Group include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders and members from AHPRA, National Boards, Accreditation Authorities and NSW Councils.

The six-week consultation is open to the public. Everyone interested in helping to shape the definition of 'cultural safety' that will be used in the National Scheme and by NHLF members is warmly invited to share their views.

The [consultation](#) is open until 5:00pm, Wednesday 15 May 2019.

Help define this important term for the National Scheme. For more information read the [media release](#) on the AHPRA website.

Titles in health advertising – how to get it right

AHPRA and National Boards have published a new resource to help practitioners understand their legal obligations when using titles in health advertising.

The titles tool addresses the uncertainty some practitioners might have around this issue and outlines some of the common pitfalls that can result in titles being considered misleading under the National Law.

Misuse of a protected title, specialist title or endorsements is an offence under sections 113-119 of the National Law or may constitute behaviour for which health, conduct or performance action may be taken against a registered health practitioner under Part 8 of the National Law. However, advertisers should also be aware that while use of some titles may not necessarily breach title protections under sections 113-119, they may be considered false, misleading or deceptive under the advertising provisions in the National Law (section 133).

The titles tool is the latest in a series of [resources and support materials](#) developed to help health practitioners, healthcare providers and other advertisers of regulated health services check and correct their advertising so it complies with the National Law.

The [titles tool](#) is available in the *Advertising resources* section of the AHPRA 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 Scheme also refer to information published on www.ahpra.gov.au or send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Are your contact details up-to-date?

It is important that your contact details are up-to-date to receive renewal reminders from AHPRA and information from the Board. You can check your 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.

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.



Brett Simmonds
Chair, Pharmacy Board of Australia
8 May 2019

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.*