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Chair's message

Welcome to the August 2017 newsletter from the Podiatry Board of Australia.

The Board welcomed the opportunity to present to the profession at the May 2017 Australasian Podiatry Conference on the outcomes of the Board's analysis of complaints or concerns (called 'notifications' in the National Law¹) received about podiatrists and podiatric surgeons between July 2010 and June 2014. The aim of the presentation was to share the key themes from the analysis with the profession and encourage podiatrists and podiatric surgeons to reflect on their own practice; identify areas for improvement; and undertake professional development activities to achieve their learning goals.

This newsletter includes important information about how the National Boards and AHPRA will manage complaints about the advertising of health services. Please take the time to make sure you understand your professional and legal obligation to advertise responsibly and ensure that your advertising complies with the National Law requirements.

Cathy Loughry
Chair, Podiatry Board of Australia



Upcoming breakfast forum in Hobart – register your interest

As part of our communication and engagement strategy, the Board is holding a breakfast forum for registrants on Thursday 28 September 2017 in Hobart. An invitation to the forum has been emailed to podiatrists and podiatric surgeons whose principal place of practice is in Tasmania.

All podiatrists and podiatric surgeons are welcome to attend even if your principal place of practice is in a different state or territory.

The forum is a great opportunity for local podiatrists and podiatric surgeons and members of the Board to meet informally and discuss current issues in podiatry practice. Members of the Board will present on the following topic, which will be followed by an open discussion with members of the profession:

Themes identified through an analysis of complaints or concerns (called 'notifications' in the National Law) received by the Board about podiatrists and podiatric surgeons between July 2010 and June 2014.

The forum is being held at the AHPRA office, Level 5, 99 Bathurst Street, Hobart from 7.30am to 8.30am. A light breakfast will be served.

If you haven't already registered your interest in attending the forum you can do so by email at forum@podiatryboard.gov.au.

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

Revised recency of practice registration standard now in effect

The Board's revised recency of practice registration standard came into effect on 1 December 2016. It applies to all registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons except those with non-practising registration.

This means that when you renew your registration later this year you must declare whether or not you have met the requirements of the revised standard.

The key change to the standard is the requirement for a minimum number of hours of practice. To meet the revised standard's requirements, a practitioner must have practised in their scope of practice for a minimum of 450 hours in the previous three years or 150 hours in the previous 12 months.

The Board has published [guidelines](#) and [FAQ](#) to help practitioners understand the requirements of the revised standard.

Audit

The Board's 2017 practitioner audit has started. The audit will assess compliance with the registration standards for the profession. Registrants are selected at random for audit.

Information about the audit process can be found on the Board's [audit](#) page.

Are you on track with your CPD?

As a registered health professional you will understand the importance of continuing professional development in providing safe and effective podiatry services, regardless of whether you have been practising for many years or are a relatively new graduate. CPD enables us to maintain, improve and broaden our knowledge, expertise and competence, as well as developing the personal and professional qualities required throughout our professional lives.

To get the maximum benefit from your professional development activities, it is important that you consciously reflect on your practice and plan your CPD activities for the year to meet your individual professional development needs. Reflective practice can be seen as a cycle – reflect on your practice; identify areas for improvement; identify relevant activities; include these activities in your annual CPD; reflect on your CPD; then start the cycle again by reflecting on your practice.

Remember that at least five hours of your CPD must be in an interactive setting with other practitioners, such as face to-face education. This can include technologies that enable interaction such as Skype or videoconferencing

The Board has published guidelines for CPD as well as FAQ and templates to assist you to plan and record your CPD activities. These can be found on the [policies, codes and guidelines](#) section of the Board's website.

Advertising compliance and enforcement strategy now online

New advertising information is now available on the AHPRA website to help podiatrists and podiatric surgeons check and correct their advertising so they comply with legal requirements. The National Boards and AHPRA have published a strategy for the National Scheme to help keep health service consumers safe from misleading advertising.

The [Advertising compliance and enforcement strategy for the National Scheme](#) 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.

Practitioners have a professional and legal obligation to advertise responsibly and support members of the community to make informed choices about their healthcare. The National Law limits how regulated health services² can be advertised.

When preparing advertising, you should always ensure that your advertising is not false, misleading or deceptive in any way. You are encouraged to use the resources available on AHPRA's website to **check** and, if necessary, **correct** your advertising to ensure you **comply** with National Law requirements.

This strategy builds on the previous education and enforcement work from National Boards and AHPRA and will be supported by publishing new materials in the coming weeks to help health practitioners understand their advertising obligations.

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.

More information, including the strategy and examples of unacceptable statements in advertising, is available on the [Advertising resources](#) section of the [AHPRA website](#).

AHPRA's regulatory role means it may need to take action for non-compliant advertising. If you are unsure about whether or not your advertising complies with the National Law you should seek advice from your:

- professional association
- insurer, and/or
- an independent legal adviser.

² A 'regulated health service' is a service provided by, or usually provided by, a health practitioner, as defined in the National Law. The advertising provisions of the National Law cover the advertising of a regulated health service, or the advertising of a business that provides a regulated health service.

Code of conduct

The Board's [Code of conduct](#) (the code) sets out the expected professional standards for registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons and should underpin all aspects of your podiatry practice. It contains important standards in relation to:

- providing good care, including shared decision-making
- working with patients, and
- working with other practitioners.
- working within the healthcare system
- minimising risk
- maintaining professional performance
- professional behaviour and ethical conduct
- ensuring practitioner health, and
- teaching, supervising and assessing.

The code also serves as a guide to the public and consumers of health services about what good practice is and the standard of behaviour they should expect from their registered health practitioner.

Upcoming review of the code

The Code of conduct (the code) was published in March 2014 and the Board, together with the other National Boards that share the code³, has started a scheduled review that will draw on best available research and data and involve stakeholder consultation and engagement.

Even though the review is still at an early research phase, 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 use its website and social media to inform the podiatry profession about how it can contribute to the review. The Board will highlight opportunities to be involved in the review in future communiqués and newsletters.

Appointment to the Registration and Notifications Committee

The Board has a Registration and Notifications Committee (RNC) which consists of practitioner and community members. The role of the RNC is to make decisions about individual registration and notification matters, based on the national policies and standards set by the Board. The Board has delegated the necessary powers to the RNC to enable it to carry out these functions.

Following a call for applications, Mr Anthony Short was appointed as a practitioner member to the RNC.

Quarterly registration data

The Board publishes quarterly data profiling Australia's podiatry workforce. The data report for the January to March 2017 quarter was recently published on the [Board's website](#). The report includes a number of statistical breakdowns.

As at March 2017, there were 4,913 registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons in total. Of these 4,781 held general registration as a podiatrist; 30 held both general and specialist registration as a podiatric surgeon; 77 had their registration endorsed for scheduled medicines; and 102 held non-practising registration.

National Scheme news

COAG Health Council meeting communiqué: amendments to the National Law

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 Ministerial Council) meeting which brings together all health ministers throughout Australia to provide oversight for the work of the National Scheme. AHPRA and National Boards provide a regular update to the Ministerial 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 (pretending to be registered when they are not).

Scheduled Medicines Expert Committee appointed

Late last year the Ministerial Council endorsed the AHMAC *Guidance for National Boards: Applications to the Ministerial Council for approval of endorsements in relation to scheduled medicines under section 14 of the National Law* (the Guidance).

The Guidance is published on the AHPRA website under [Ministerial directives and communiqués](#). It provides information for National Boards about the process for, and content of, an application to the Ministerial Council for approval of endorsement for scheduled medicines for a health profession under section 14 of the National Law.

Consistent with the Guidance, AHPRA has established a Scheduled Medicines Expert Committee (Expert Committee) whose role is to advise National Boards on the use of scheduled medicines generally, and on matters relevant to a National Board's proposal for a new scheduled medicines endorsement or an amendment to an existing scheduled medicines endorsement.

Following a call for applications, AHPRA is pleased to announce the following appointments to the Expert Committee:

³ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice, Chinese Medicine, Chiropractic, Dental, Medical Radiation Practice, Occupational Therapy, Optometry, Osteopathy, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, with some minor profession-specific changes for some of these National Boards.

- Professor Anne Tonkin, Chair
- Ms Vanessa Brotto, core member
- Dr Susan Hunt, core member
- Professor Lisa Nissen, core member, and
- Ms Sarah Spagnardi, core member.

The Expert Committee is expected to hold its inaugural meeting later this year. Information about the Expert Committee, including the terms of reference, will be published on the AHPRA website shortly.

Working together to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patient safety

NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee) week is a celebration of the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is an important week for all Australians, with celebrations held across Australia each July. This year NAIDOC week's theme was 'our languages matter'.

AHPRA and National Boards marked NAIDOC week (2-9 July) by reaffirming their commitment to an Australia-wide National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy.

AHPRA and the National Boards have been working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and regulatory partners to get this important work started. As regulators of over 657,000 health practitioners in 14 different health professions, the opportunity to improve patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's health system is an important one. This commitment will be achieved through a [National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy](#).

This work is about strong partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, not about AHPRA or the National Boards acting in isolation. The National Boards are working actively towards influencing cultural safety, equity and justice in healthcare for patients. A strategy group is in place which includes 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.

Keep in touch with the Board

- Visit www.podiatryboard.gov.au for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines and FAQ. Visiting the website regularly is the best way to stay in touch with news and updates from the Board.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the [Enquiries](#) link on every web page under *Contact us*.
- For registration enquiries, call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 9275 9009 (for overseas callers).
- To update your contact details for important registration renewal emails and other Board updates, go to the AHPRA website: [Update contact details](#).
- Address mail correspondence to: Cathy Loughry, Chair, Podiatry Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001.

Follow AHPRA on social media



Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
ABN: 78 685 433 429

