Medical Board of Australia | AHPRA

Frequently asked questions

Non-practising registration

The Medical Board of Australia provides the following information to help answer some questions about non-practising registration.

What is non-practising registration?

Medical practitioners with non-practising registration cannot undertake any clinical *practice* (as defined below). They are not permitted to prescribe or refer, regardless of whether they are being remunerated.

There is a reduced fee ($130) for non-practising registration. These practitioners continue to receive the Board's publications.

This type of registration may be suitable for medical practitioners who:

- have retired completely from medical practice
- are not practising temporarily (for example, on maternity or paternity leave) or
- who are not practising in Australia but are practising overseas.

How does the Board define *practice*?

Practice is any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner in their profession. For the purposes of the Board's standards, practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

I hold non-practising registration. What happens if I assist in an emergency?

The Board does not regard assisting in an emergency to be a breach of non-practising registration.

What happens if I let my registration lapse?

If you do not renew your registration, your registration will lapse and you will no longer be able to practise medicine. You will not be able to prescribe or refer patients. You can still use the title "doctor" and have access to the Board's website, but you will not receive any Board publications.

Can I change my mind and reapply for registration later?

Yes, you can apply for registration at a later date, but you will need to meet the Board's registration standards when you re-apply, including criminal history checks and verification of qualifications and identity.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

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What is limited registration (public interest – occasional practice)?

This type of registration was only available under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory as a one-off transition to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). It only applies to practitioners who, on 30 June 2010, held a type of registration that allowed them to refer and/or prescribe, but not receive a fee for providing that service. If you do not already have this type of registration, it is not an option to seek this type of registration now. The National Law does not allow the Board to grant this type of registration to any new applicants. However, if you believe that you should have transitioned into the National Scheme in this category, please contact us through the online enquiry form on the website.

What type of registration do I need if I only want to refer and prescribe, without a fee?

Unless you now have limited registration (public interest – occasional practice), you must have general or specialist registration, or a category of limited registration, that allows you to prescribe and refer. You must pay the registration fee and meet the Board's registration standards, including Continuing Professional Development and Professional Indemnity Insurance.

Why did the Board adopt this position?

One of the reasons cited by many doctors for wanting to be able to have limited registration is to be able to prescribe and refer for themselves and their immediate family and friends. The Board believes that all doctors should have their own general practitioner and should avoid, whenever possible, treating family and friends.

Good Medical Practice: A code of conduct for doctors in Australia – the professional standards framework for doctors registered to practise in Australia states that good medical practice:

1. includes having a general practitioner and seeking independent, objective advice when you need medical care, and being aware of the risks of self-diagnosis and self-treatment (9.2.1) and

2. involves whenever possible, avoid providing medical care to anyone with whom you have a close personal relationship. In most cases, providing care to close friends, those you work with and family members is inappropriate because of the lack of objectivity, possible discontinuity of care, and risks to the doctor and patient. In some cases, providing care to those close to you is unavoidable. Whenever this is the case, good medical practice requires recognition and careful management of these issues (13.14).

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