

## Media Release

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### National Board Consults on Guidelines

12 March 2010

The Medical Board of Australia has released for consultation new guidelines on key professional standards.

They provide guidance to medical practitioners about new obligations and responsibilities that will come into effect with the national registration and accreditation scheme. The new responsibilities are contained in the National Law (*Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*), which will come into effect on 1 July 2010.

These guidelines apply to the 10 health professions covered by the National Law and the national scheme. They are:

- Guidelines on mandatory notifications (reporting), explaining the situations in which a health practitioner, or their employer, must notify the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (the Agency) about a registered health practitioner's conduct, or an education provider must notify the Agency about a registered student. There are four types of notifiable (reportable) conduct for medical practitioners:
  - practising while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs
  - sexual misconduct in connection with practice
  - impairment that has placed the public at risk of substantial harm and
  - placing the public at risk of harm because of practising in a way that has significantly departed from accepted professional standards.

In the case of registered students, the only notifiable conduct is when a student has an impairment that, in the course of undertaking clinical training, may place the public at substantial risk of harm.

- Guidelines on advertising, explaining specific obligations under the National Law and defining what is acceptable and what is unacceptable advertising. The guidelines recognise the value of providing information to the public about practitioners and the services that they provide. They clarify that information in an advertisement for a health service should be reliable and useful and help patients make informed decisions about accessing services.

The Board has decided to adopt *Good Medical Practice: A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia*, which was developed through an extensive consultation process by the Australian Medical Council on behalf of State and Territory Medical Boards. The Board is making minor amendments to *Good*

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*Medical Practice* to reflect the National Law and will publish the revised code to support and provide guidance to medical practitioners.

The draft guidelines are published on the national board website at [www.medicalboard.gov.au](http://www.medicalboard.gov.au) and are open for consultation until 7 April 2010.

Having considered the feedback from the consultation process, the Board will finalise the guidelines and publish them on the Board website. They will be effective from 1 July 2010.

Medical Board of Australia Chair, Dr Joanna Flynn, said the guidelines aimed to support registrants to understand and meet their responsibilities under the National Law.

“The new national registration and accreditation scheme will bring mobility, consistency and efficiency to health practitioner regulation across Australia,” Dr Flynn said.

“Registrants will be able to register once and practise across Australia. However, the National Law also brings some new responsibilities for registrants and the Board hopes that these Guidelines will help them understand and meet these,” she said.

### Media enquiries

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