



Media release

28 October 2011

Medical Board of Australia releases sexual boundaries guidelines

The Medical Board of Australia (the Board) today released [guidelines for doctors on sexual boundaries](#).

The sexual boundaries guidelines are consistent with the advice published in *Good Medical Practice: A code of conduct for doctors in Australia* and are published on the Board's [website](#).

The guidelines confirm that good medical practice relies on trust between doctors and patients and their families. They confirm that it is always unethical and unprofessional for a doctor to breach this trust by entering into a sexual relationship with a patient, regardless of whether the patient has consented to the relationship.

The guidelines provide nationally consistent advice to medical practitioners, replacing the state-by-state advice issued by previous regulatory authorities.

"In general, the national guidelines do not change the bar from what was previously expected, but they do make explicit the Board's expectations on this important issue," said Chair of the Medical Board of Australia, Dr Joanna Flynn.

The guidelines confirm that it may also be unethical and unprofessional for a doctor to enter into a sexual relationship with a former patient, an existing patient's carer or a close relative of an existing patient, if this breaches the trust the patient placed in the doctor.

The Board will investigate any medical practitioner who is alleged to have breached the guidelines and, if the allegations are substantiated, the Board will take necessary action under the National Law.

The final guidelines on sexual boundaries follow a consultation process and have been informed by feedback provided.

Under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, the role of the Board is to protect the public and make sure that only doctors who can practise safely and ethically are registered.

For more information

- Visit www.medicalboard.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
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