



Communiqué

Medical Board of Australia meeting: 22 August 2012

The Medical Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

Review of accreditation arrangements

An important objective of the National Law is to facilitate the provision of high-quality education and training of health practitioners. The accreditation function is the primary way of achieving this. The National Law defines the respective roles of the Board and its appointed accreditation authority, the Australian Medical Council (AMC), in the accreditation of medical schools and medical specialist colleges.

Health Ministers first appointed the accreditation authorities for each of the 10 original professions in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme), before it began. The National Law requires National Boards to review the arrangements for the exercise of the accreditation functions by 30 June 2013.

Given that there are already arrangements in place, the review process for all of the original 10 National Boards has begun with an assessment of the way each accreditation authority has performed its functions.

The Board has written to the AMC inviting them to indicate whether they wish to continue exercising accreditation functions for the medical profession, and if so, to provide a report to the Board. The AMC has done so and provided the Board with a comprehensive report. The Board has reviewed this and has formed a preliminary view that the current arrangements for the accreditation function are satisfactory, taking into account the Board's experience with the AMC over the past two years.

The Board is currently undertaking a short preliminary consultation with key stakeholders, and will open the consultation in the next few weeks. The consultation documents will be posted on the Board's website at www.medicalboard.gov.au under 'news'.

Renewal of registration for 2012/13

The Board launched its 2012 registration renewal campaign in July 2012. Medical practitioners who have previously provided an email address to the Board have been reminded by email to renew their registration on a number of occasions. Paper reminders will also be posted to medical practitioners who have not renewed.

At the time of writing this Communiqué, around 43% of medical practitioners had renewed their registration online.

Under the National Law, practitioners who do not renew their registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the Register of medical practitioners. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise medicine in Australia until a new application for registration is approved. Renewals received within the month of their registration expiry date will incur an additional late fee, which reflects the cost of managing late renewals. The Board encourages all practitioners to act on reminders to renew if they wish to continue to practise.

Health Professions Agreement

The Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) have now published the Health Profession Agreement that outlines the services that AHPRA will provide to the Board in 2012/13. Under the National Law, the Board and AHPRA work in partnership to implement the National Scheme, each with specific roles, powers and responsibilities set down in the National Law.

The guiding principles of the National Law require the National Scheme to operate in a 'transparent, accountable, efficient, effective and fair way'; and for registration fees to be reasonable 'having regard to the efficient and effective operation of the scheme'.

The Board and AHPRA are committed to transparent and accountable financial reporting. As AHPRA's reporting capability strengthens, it will be able to publish more detailed information about each National Board's financial operations and AHPRA's performance. This complements the audited data and performance reporting included in each year's annual report.

The Board is also committed to using practitioners' registration fees wisely in regulating the profession in the public interest. The Medical Board of Australia's Health Profession Agreement is available for review on the Board's website at www.medicalboard.gov.au.

Quarterly data

One of the benefits of the National Scheme is that we now have national registers where we publish information about every registered health practitioner in Australia. For the first time, it is possible to produce accurate reports on the number of practitioners registered in each profession in Australia.

Earlier this year, the Board began publishing quarterly data profiling Australia's medical workforce, including a number of statistical breakdowns about registrants. This data is published on the Board's website at www.medicalboard.gov.au under 'news' and 'statistics'. Similar information about other health professions is also available on each Board's website.

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