



## Communiqué

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### Medical Board of Australia meeting: 20 March 2013

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 registration standards, guidelines and codes

The first 10 National Boards to enter the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) developed standards, guidelines and codes for its commencement on 1 July 2010. These standards, guidelines and codes were scheduled for review at least every three years.

The National Boards will start the public consultation process with the release of three of the guidelines which are common to all National Boards:

- revised *Guidelines for advertising*
- proposed *Social media policy, and*
- revised *Guidelines for mandatory notifications.*

The consultation process provides an opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback. Information about the consultations will be published on the Board's [website](#).

Many other Boards are also consulting on their code of conduct. The Medical Board's code of conduct, *Good Medical Practice* is being reviewed and the Board will consult on it in the coming months.

#### Review of the pathways to registration

All international medical graduates (IMGs) who apply for limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice or limited registration for area of need are required to meet the requirements of one of three nationally consistent assessment pathways:

- Competent authority pathway
- Standard pathway
- Specialist pathway.

The National Scheme has opened up opportunities to streamline and simplify the assessment and registration of IMGs. The 2011 report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, after its inquiry into the registration processes and support for overseas trained doctors, made recommendations about reducing red tape, duplication and administrative hurdles faced by IMGs while ensuring that the Australian standard continues to be rigorously applied.

The Board has reviewed the IMG assessment pathways and is proposing changes to the:

- Competent authority pathway
- Specialist pathway.

The Board has undertaken preliminary consultation and will shortly begin public consultation on the proposed changes. The consultation paper will be available on [www.medicalboard.gov.au](http://www.medicalboard.gov.au) under "News" then "Current consultations". All stakeholders are invited to provide their feedback to the Board on these proposals.

### **Managing the impaired practitioner**

One of the ways in which the Board protects the public is through the assessment and management of practitioners who are or may be impaired.

The National Law defines impairment as a *physical or mental impairment, disability, condition or disorder (including substance abuse or dependence) that detrimentally affects or is likely to detrimentally affect the person's capacity to practise the profession.*

The Board has defined its regulatory role and responsibilities in assessing and managing impaired medical practitioners under the National Law. The Board agreed that while its interactions with impaired practitioners will continue to be respectful and supportive, its primary role is to assess the risk that the practitioner's impairment poses to the public and take appropriate action to manage that risk. The Board does not have a role in providing therapy, treatment or pastoral care.

This work to define the role of the Board paves the way to define the role of external health programs that the Board has announced that it will fund into the future.

### **Progress on the intern project**

As requested by the Board, the Australian Medical Council (AMC) is currently undertaking work to develop a national standards framework for intern training. This work included the development of the registration standard, *Granting general registration as a medical practitioner to Australian and New Zealand medical graduates on completion of intern training*, which has been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council for interns commencing their intern year in 2014.

Late last year, the AMC consulted on:

- a set of global outcomes statements for the intern year
- a process for assessment and certification of interns
- a national framework for intern training accreditation.

Feedback from the consultation suggests support for a national framework. The documents are currently being revised to ensure that they are clear and meet the needs of stakeholders.

Further information will be provided as this work progresses.

**Dr Joanna Flynn AM**  
**Chair, Medical Board of Australia**

28 March 2013