



Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Health Practice
Chinese Medicine
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Medical Radiation Practice
Nursing and Midwifery

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Osteopathy
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Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Media release

11 June 2013

New guides on complaints in the National Scheme

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) has published new guides for health practitioners and the community about how notifications are managed in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

The [Guide for practitioners](#) and a series of information sheets aim to explain to practitioners what happens when AHPRA receives a notification on behalf of a National Board. The information complements the direct correspondence that individuals receive if a notification is made about them.

AHPRA has also developed a guide for the community about making a complaint (or notification) about a health practitioner. This *Guide for notifiers: [Do you have a concern about a health practitioner? A guide for people raising a concern](#)* will be a focus of review by the newly-established Community Reference Group for AHPRA and the National Boards.

Both guides are published online on the AHPRA website in a revised section on complaints and notifications and are accessible via the National Board websites. AHPRA collaborated with the professional associations for practitioners registered in the National Scheme to develop the guide for practitioners.

AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher said AHPRA developed the practitioners' guide to clearly explain what happens after a concern has been raised about a health practitioner, who decides what happens, how we work with health complaints entities and what practitioners can expect from our processes.

'Most of the 580,000 practitioners registered in the National Scheme are highly skilled and deeply committed to providing safe care, and it can be very confronting for them to be the subject of a notification,' Mr Fletcher said.

'Our job is to work with National Boards to protect the public. We recognise that being the subject of a notification is stressful for a health practitioner. That is why providing a clear explanation about how notifications are managed is so important,' he said.

Medical Board of Australia Chair, Dr Joanna Flynn AM, said it was important that practitioners about whom concerns had been raised had clear information, so they could focus on the issues they needed to consider about their professional practice and not be confused about the regulatory process.

'Registered practitioners have a responsibility to provide an explanation to the regulator when concerns have been raised, and we want them to be able to do so from an informed position,' Dr Flynn said.

Mr Fletcher said that together with the National Boards, the professional associations had offered constructive insights and thoughtful suggestions during the development of the guide.

'I am extremely grateful to them for the time and energy they have invested to help us develop this guide for practitioners,' he said.

'We listened carefully to their call to de-mystify our processes and provide straightforward information to practitioners about what to expect if they are the subject of a notification,' Mr Fletcher said.

About the Professions Reference Group

The Professions Reference Group, made up of members of professional associations for practitioners registered in the National Scheme, meets quarterly as an advisory group to AHPRA and provides a forum for information sharing between regulated professions and with AHPRA. Profession specific interaction continues between each professional association and their National Board.

Some members of the Professions Reference Group have offered the following comments on the *Guide for practitioners*:

Australian Nursing Federation

Australian Nursing Federation Federal Secretary Lee Thomas said that while being the subject of a complaint was very stressful, the guide would provide nurses and midwives with clear information about the processes being followed by AHPRA and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia to manage each notification.

'It will go some way to reassuring our members that there is a process being followed and give them clear information about what to expect as a result of a notification, including the implications for their registration,' Ms Thomas said.

Occupational Therapy Australia

This is an excellent, clearly written document which outlines and navigates a user through a complex system in simple logical steps.

'While of course we hope few will need it, I think it assists both consumers (the public) and professionals alike,' Occupational Therapy Australia CEO Rachel Norris said.

Australian Pharmacy Liaison Forum

The *Guide for practitioners* was endorsed by the Australian Pharmacy Liaison Forum, which is an independent coalition of representatives from national pharmacy organisations who work together on issues of national importance to the pharmacy profession and the public.

- Australian Association of Consultant Pharmacy
- Australian College of Pharmacy
- Australian Pharmacy Council
- Pharmaceutical Defence Limited
- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- The Pharmacy Guild of Australia
- Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia
- Council of Pharmacy Schools: Australia and New Zealand
- National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association
- Professional Pharmacists Australia

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