

Tribunal reprimands medical practitioner, cancels registration

10 December 2014

The State Administrative Tribunal of Western Australia has reprimanded Dr Gareth Eldred, cancelled his registration as a medical practitioner and disqualified him from applying for registration for 18 months.

The Medical Board of Australia referred the matter to the tribunal in April 2014, after a series of events dating back to October 2011 when the Board received a mandatory notification alleging that Dr Eldred had been using prescription and illegal drugs while employed as a medical practitioner at the Fremantle Hospital and Health Service.

Dr Eldred's clinical privileges at the hospital had been suspended after an investigation by the WA Corruption and Crime Commission.

The Board took [immediate action](#) when it received the notification and suspended Dr Eldred's registration as an interim step to manage risk to the public, pending other inquiries.

In June 2013 Dr Eldred pleaded guilty to, and was convicted of, five charges of armed robbery, four charges of robbery and one charge of attempted robbery. The robberies occurred over six months between May and December 2012, and involved stealing oxycodone and/or money from pharmacies and threatening violence. The tribunal found that Dr Eldred committed the offences to obtain drugs, because he was substance dependent at the time.

In September 2013 Dr Eldred was sentenced to a custodial sentence of four years and six months, eligible for parole after two years and six months (backdated from 5 December 2012).

Dr Eldred admitted to the tribunal that he had engaged in professional misconduct, had an impairment and that he:

- practised as a medical practitioner when affected by withdrawals from heroin, oxycodone and various schedule 4 medications, which put patients at risk of harm
- breached the *Poisons Act 1964 (WA)* and/or the *Poisons Regulations 1965 (WA)* in relation to self-administration of oxycodone without proper prescription, and failed to comply with schedule 8 register requirements
- helped supply oxycodone to friends and acquaintances when he knew or ought to have known that the intended purpose didn't accord with recognised therapeutic standards, and/or had the potential for misuse
- failed to notify suspected drug addicts to the WA Department of Health
- failed to make any adequate clinical notes in relation to six patients he prescribed to
- breached the Board's [code of conduct](#), and
- demonstrated conduct inconsistent with being a fit and proper person to hold registration as a medical practitioner.

The reasons for the decision are published on the [tribunal website](#).

For more information

- Visit www.ahpra.gov.au
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200