

Medical practitioner reprimanded and conditions imposed

13 March 2015

The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal has reprimanded Dr Christopher Alroe and imposed conditions on his registration for professional misconduct.

The Medical Board of Australia referred Dr Alroe to the tribunal on five charges related to the prescription of drugs of dependence.

Dr Alroe agreed with the Board that his conduct, as a whole, amounted to professional misconduct and that he should be reprimanded, immediately surrender his endorsement to prescribe controlled drugs and not apply for reinstatement of this authority.

Before the matter was scheduled for hearing, the Board and Dr Alroe presented agreed facts to the tribunal.

Dr Alroe conceded that the Board had proven that he had:

- Prescribed controlled drugs of dependence to patients whom he knew, or ought to have known, to be drug dependent, without the approval of the Drugs of Dependence Unit (DDU) in breach of conditions imposed upon his registration.
- Failed to report to the DDU before prescribing controlled drugs to any person in breach of conditions imposed upon his registration.
- Prescribed controlled drugs to patients in excess of or otherwise other than under the approved or reported dosage, in breach of the *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996* (Qld).

The Board conceded that it had not proven that Dr Alroe had:

- Prescribed controlled drugs of dependency to patients whom he knew, or ought to have known, to be drug dependent, without the approval of the chief executive of Queensland Health, or her delegate, in breach of the *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996* (Qld).
- Failed to endorse prescriptions with adequate directions about the use of the controlled drug and the dose to be taken or administered in breach of the regulation.

The first of the proven charges related to a period between August 2010 and December 2010, when Dr Alroe had continued to prescribe methadone (patient A) and Oxycodone (patient B) even though his authority to do so had ended.

The DDU had been aware that Dr Alroe was prescribing methadone to patient A in breach of his authority which had ended on 2 August 2010. However, the DDU did not notify Dr Alroe that it was inappropriate for him to continue prescribing the methadone without approval, even though he had kept the DDU informed of this.

Given the DDU's lack of action, Dr Alroe believed he could continue to prescribe Oxycodone to patient B provided that he continued to disclose the prescribing to the DDU.

The tribunal imposed conditions on Dr Alroe's registration, including:

1. that he must not reapply to Queensland Health for reinstatement of his authority to prescribe any controlled drug, and
2. the conditions, such as the requirement to allow Board access to his patient/practice records, be brought to the attention of prospective employers.

The Tribunal imposed the conditions for four years and Dr Alroe was ordered to pay the Board's costs of \$90,000.

The reasons for the decision are available on the [AustLII website](#).

For more information

- Visit www.ahpra.gov.au
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 9275 9009 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200