

Tribunal reprimands and suspends doctor over alternative, unproven medical treatment

27 August 2015

The State Administrative Tribunal of Western Australia has reprimanded Dr William Barnes, suspending him for three months and imposing conditions on his registration.

After a referral from the WA State Coroner, the Board and AHPRA investigated concerns that Dr Barnes had been actively involved in the administration of an alternative, unproven medical treatment to cancer patients in WA.

The Board subsequently referred the matter to the tribunal, alleging that Dr Barnes had:

- consulted a patient for the treatment of cancer of the rectum and/or malignant metastases on 34 occasions, and advised or recommended treatment including intravenous administration of Vitamin C, intravenous and oral administration of Carnivora, and subcutaneous administration of mistletoe extract
- provided this treatment to the patient at his medical practice on 70 occasions, at a cost to the patient of more than \$20,000
- a direct financial interest in providing the treatment by being a director and shareholder in the company that sold the treatment to the patient, and
- participated in facilitating and providing the treatment to the patient in circumstances when there was no evidence that the treatment would be effective.

In a written agreement between the Board and Dr Barnes dated 6 July 2015, Dr Barnes admitted to having behaved in a way that constituted improper conduct under the *Medical Practitioners Act 2008 (WA)*, which was in force at the time.

The tribunal reprimanded Dr Barnes, and ordered that:

- his registration as a medical practitioner be suspended for three months from 15 July 2015
- he pay the Board's costs, and
- conditions are imposed on his registration.

The reasons for the tribunal's decision are on [the State Administrative Tribunal \(WA\) website](#) and will be published on Austlii.