

Media statement

AHPRA calls for more reporting to improve public safety

21 October 2015

AHPRA today called on Victorian health practitioners and services to report their concerns about poor quality care, so regulators can act when needed to keep the public safe.

Compared with national data, the number of mandatory reports made in Victoria is lower than the national average. Victorian employers also report fewer matters to AHPRA than employers in other states and territories.

In 2013-14, the rate of mandatory reporting in Victoria was 11.8 mandatory reports per 10,000 registered practitioners, compared with a national rate of 18.9 per 10,000 practitioners.

In 2013-14, Victorian employers reported fewer matters to AHPRA than employers in other states and territories. In Victoria, the notification rate was 12.3 per 10,000 practitioners, compared with a national rate of 14 per 10,000 practitioners.

'If we are not told about concerns, we are not able to do our job as a regulator to manage possible risk to patients,' AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher said.

The law requires employers and registered health practitioners to report serious concerns and protects them when making reports in good faith.

Under the National Law, employers and registered health practitioners are required to report 'notifiable conduct', including when the practitioner has 'placed the public at risk of harm' through a 'significant departure from accepted professional standards'.

AHPRA will work with the Department of Health and Human Services and health services to ensure that all employers and health practitioners understand their reporting obligations.

'We also want to play our part in creating a more open culture in health services, which learns from mistakes and supports front-line staff to deliver high quality, safe care,' Mr Fletcher said.

AHPRA is the regulatory agency responsible for receiving and investigating complaints about individual registered health practitioners, working with Boards. The Health Services Commissioner is responsible for managing complaints about health systems, and health services have quality and safety systems and reporting responsibilities.

We work very closely with the Health Services Commissioner to ensure that whatever door a complaint about a registered health practitioner comes through, the right agency deals with it.

Regulation is one part of the quality and safety healthcare system. To strengthen regulation, improve public safety and better manage risk to patients AHPRA will:

- commission independent advice from experts in safety and quality systems to improve the way we detect and respond to factors in individual cases, which may reflect wider problems
- review options within the law to disclose more, and more timely information to employers, when this is in the public interest and does not breach natural justice principles
- commission an external review of actions we have taken to improve our notification management processes, close identified gaps in Victoria and tell us if there's more we need to do
- work with the Health Services Commissioner and consult with the community on ways to make it easier for the community to raise a concern, including through a possible single 'front door' for complaints.

On 16 October 2015, [AHPRA announced](#) that Australia's health regulators had launched investigations into other doctors and midwives at the Djerriwarrh Health Service in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria.

Investigations are a means of gathering information to see if there is a risk to the public that needs to be managed by regulatory action.

'It is too early to say what the outcome of these investigations will be, and we can't go into any more detail about these cases to protect the integrity of our ongoing work and make sure our processes are fair to everyone,' Mr Fletcher said.

AHPRA encourages anyone with concerns about a health practitioner to contact us on 1300 419 495.

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