

Have you contacted the health service or health practitioner directly?

This is often the quickest way to resolve a complaint.

## We can...

By working together, the HCC, Ahpra and the Boards can improve the quality and safety of health services.

If a Board believes there is a serious risk to public safety, it can restrict or remove a practitioner's right to practise.

If a health service provider engages in dangerous or unethical conduct and is not registered with a National Board, the HCC can prohibit them from practising.

## We can't...

- give you advice about your health
- tell a practitioner to give you medication or treatment
- help you bring legal proceedings against anybody.

## We invite you to contact us



Level 26  
570 Bourke Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

1300 582 113  
[www.hcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hcc.vic.gov.au)



Level 8  
111 Bourke Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

GPO Box 9958  
Melbourne VIC 3001  
1300 419 495  
[www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)

**National Relay Service**  
[www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

**Translating and Interpreting Service**  
[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au) 131 450

How to make a complaint about a:

- ▶ health practitioner
- ▶ health service
- ▶ holder of health records

Health Complaints  
Commissioner (HCC)

Australian Health Practitioner  
Regulation Agency (Ahpra)



## What can Ahpra and the National Board do?

We can consider concerns if:

- a practitioner's behaviour is placing the public at risk
- a practitioner is practising their profession in an unsafe way
- a practitioner's ability to make safe judgments about their patients might be impaired because of their health.

We work with practitioners and their workplaces if practice improvements are required.

We take action in cases where steps taken by a practitioner and their workplaces aren't sufficient to ensure the safety of future patients.

We refer serious breaches of our codes of conduct or professional standards to independent panels or tribunals.

Our processes are free. We are impartial and we act in the public interest.

We can decide to talk to the HCC about your complaint and refer it there if that is more appropriate.

The *Register of practitioners* is available at [www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Register-of-Practitioners](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Register-of-Practitioners).

## You can complain to Ahpra and National Boards or HCC about a:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner
- Chinese medicine practitioner
- chiropractor
- dentist
- medical practitioner (doctor)
- midwife
- medical radiation practitioner
- nurse
- occupational therapist
- optometrist
- osteopath
- paramedic
- pharmacist
- physiotherapist
- podiatrist
- psychologist, or
- person claiming to be registered in one of these professions when they are not.

## You can complain to the HCC about:

Any health service in Victoria:

- hospitals
- medical/dental practices
- community health services
- pharmacy services generally
- ambulance services generally
- any providers not registered with a Board such as counsellors and alternative therapists.

## What can the HCC do?

The HCC can assist parties to resolve complaints about healthcare or the handling of health records in Victoria. The HCC's process is voluntary, free, confidential and impartial.

You can contact the HCC about something that happened to you or to someone else, including:

- access to services
- quality and safety
- care and attention
- respect, dignity and consideration
- communication about treatment, options and costs
- the level of involvement in healthcare decisions
- access, privacy and confidentiality of personal health information
- complaint handling by the health service provider

You can also complain about how your health information was handled – these complaints can be about any person or organisation that holds your health records, not just a health service provider e.g. a school.

If you have not tried to resolve the matter with the provider the HCC will usually require you to try that step first.

The types of agreed outcomes that parties can achieve include:

- an explanation about what happened
- an apology
- access to treatment
- access to records
- offers of refunds or compensation
- changes to policies or procedures to prevent future problems.

If the practitioner is a registered health practitioner, the HCC must talk to AHPRA and the Board about your complaint to decide whether the Board or the HCC will manage all or part of your complaint

Where appropriate the HCC can ban unregistered health service providers whose conduct is dangerous or unethical and publish information to warn the public.

More information is available on the HCC website at [www.hcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hcc.vic.gov.au).