



Communiqué

10 March 2016

The Podiatry Board of Australia (Board) meets each month to consider and decide on matters related to its regulatory function under the National Law¹ and within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

This communiqué highlights key matters from the Board's meeting as well as other important information.

This communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board and matters regarding the National Scheme. Please forward it on to colleagues and employees who may be interested in its content.

February 2016 meeting

The Board held its first meeting for 2016 in Melbourne on 24 February 2016.

Regulatory plan for 2016/17

The Board finalised its regulatory work plan for 2016/17.

The regulatory work plan will be incorporated into the health profession agreement (HPA) for 2016/17. The HPA sets out the partnership between the Board and AHPRA, and the services AHPRA will provide in supporting the Board to carry out its functions. The HPA for 2016/17 will be published on the Board's website later this year.

Review of accreditation standards for endorsement for scheduled medicines

In August 2012, the Board approved the following accreditation standards for endorsement for scheduled medicines:

- ESM accreditation standards Part A: Podiatric Therapeutics
- ESM accreditation standards Part B: Supervised Practice

At the February 2016 meeting, the Board repealed its approval of the *ESM Accreditation Standards: Part B - Supervised Practice* as these accreditation standards have never been used to accredit programs of study for the purpose of endorsement for scheduled medicines and will not be used to accredit programs of study in the future because they are outdated.

The Board has asked its accreditation authority, ANZPAC, to develop revised accreditation standards for endorsement for scheduled medicines.

Revised standard for recency of practice published

A revised registration standard for recency of practice was published in early February.

The [revised standard](#) will come in to effect on **1 December 2016** and will replace the standard that is currently in place. This standard will apply to all registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons except those with non-practising registration. Practitioners will need to meet the obligations of the revised standard by the time they renew their registration in 2017.

¹ The Board is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

The revised standard has been published well in advance of its commencement to provide practitioners adequate time to prepare for the changes to the recency requirements.

The key change to the Board's recency of practice requirements is the introduction of minimum hours of practice.

To meet the standard, practitioners must practise within their **scope of practice** for a minimum of:

- 450 hours in the previous three years (equivalent to approx. 3 months full-time), or
- 150 hours in the previous 12 months (equivalent to approx. 1 month full-time).

The Board expects that most practitioners who are currently practising will meet the revised standard.

However, the change may affect those podiatrists and podiatric surgeons who are currently practising infrequently or who are currently taking a break from practice and wish to return to practice. The Board encourages all practitioners to review the new registration standard to check whether they will be affected by the changes.

The Board has also published guidelines and FAQ to support the standard and to help practitioners understand its requirements.

For more information, see the [news item](#) on the Board's website.

Revised guidelines for infection prevention and control published

The Board has published revised [Guidelines on infection prevention and control](#). The guidelines, which describe the obligations of registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons with respect to infection prevention and control, will come into effect on **4 April 2016**.

Effective infection prevention and control is central to providing high quality care for patients and a safe working environment for those that work in healthcare settings. The Board expects podiatrists and podiatric surgeons to practise in a way that maintains and enhances public health and safety by ensuring that the risk of the spread of infection is prevented or minimised.

The Board has made minimal changes to the guidelines and is continuing to adopt the [National Health and Medical Research Council Australian guidelines for the prevention and control of infection in healthcare](#) (NHMRC guidelines). The NHMRC guidelines were developed using best available evidence and aim to promote and facilitate the overall goal of infection prevention and control.

Practitioners must be familiar with and practise within the recommendations of the NHMRC guidelines as they apply to the practice setting(s) in which they work.

Self audit tool – infection prevention and control

The Board has also developed and published a [tool](#) that practitioners may choose to use to see how well they comply with the Board's Guidelines on infection prevention and control.

The Board hopes that practitioners will utilise the self audit tool as a checklist to ensure that their workplace is in a clean and hygienic state and they are taking the necessary practicable steps to prevent or minimise the spread of infection.

Call for applications

The Board is currently seeking applications from experienced registered practitioners for appointment to the Board's list of approved persons for panel appointments.

Under the National Law, health panels and performance and professional standards panels are convened by National Boards when required to hold hearings into specific health, performance or conduct matters for individual registered health professionals. Such panels consist of members chosen from the list of persons approved by the National Board.

The Board is seeking registered practising podiatrists and podiatric surgeons and medical practitioners² with at least five (5) years recent practice experience and who reside in all states and territories (except NSW³).for appointment to the list of approved persons.

Information about the role and the application process, including an application guide and application form can be found on the AHPRA [website](#).

National awareness campaign

You may have seen the beginning of the AHPRA national awareness campaign. **Know your obligations**, the first of three phases, directed at employers of health practitioners, launched at the close of last year. The message has been shared over social media through targeted ads resulting in a doubling of our online community.

The next phase of the campaign is targeted at practitioners. Under the headline of **The not-so-small print**, practitioners are encouraged to stay up to date with regulation changes as they occur, and to be aware of their obligations as registered health practitioners. Advertisements will be rolled out later this month across a mix of social media, industry publications and newsletters.

The final phase will be directed at the public to increase awareness of the [national register of practitioners](#).

Employer obligations

If you employ registered health practitioners, you have an important obligation to ensure that they hold current registration and that you understand your mandatory notification requirements under the National Law.

AHPRA has published [resources](#) to help you understand and meet your obligations, which are designed to complement your recruitment requirements and processes. These materials state exactly what your obligations are and it is important that you are familiar with them.

Health practitioner regulation: Learn how you're protected

A new video and an accompanying infographic explaining the Australia-wide scheme that is in place to protect members of the public was released by AHPRA in December.

Both resources are available on the [What we do](#) page of the AHPRA website or read the [news item](#) on the Board website for more information. The video can also be watched on AHPRA's [YouTube channel](#).

Podiatry Board of Australia profession profile

The Board will publish in late March a report of its work in the regulation of the podiatry profession under the National Scheme during 2014/15.

The report provides a profession-specific view of the Board's work to manage risk to the public. It is a profile of regulation at work for the podiatry profession in Australia for the 12 months ending 30 June 2015.

The data in this report are drawn from data published in the [2014/15 annual report](#) of AHPRA and the National Boards, reporting on the National Scheme.

Local data summaries from a National Scheme

The National Boards and AHPRA have published [reports for each state and territory](#) on the National Scheme. They are for the 2014/15 year of the scheme.

² At least one member of a health panel must be a medical practitioner.

³ Recruitment for panel members is in accordance with section 183(2) of the National Law, and to the extent practicable, will exclude individuals whose residence or principal place of practice is in a co-regulatory jurisdiction (i.e. NSW).

The reports provide a unique insight on local outcomes within a scheme for which the core focus is protection of the public. They include local data on registration types, notifications (complaints) and mandatory notifications for the regulated health professions, for each state and territory.

Further information

Further information about the Board can be found on our [website](#) and practitioners are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policies and guidelines affecting their profession.

Cathy Loughry
Chair
Podiatry Board of Australia