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Chair's message

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2016. In this newsletter we update you on some of the Board's recent work, with a focus on the revised registration standards and guidelines that have been published in the last few months.

Last year the Board commissioned AHPRA to undertake an analysis of all notifications (complaints) relating to podiatrists and podiatric surgeons since the start of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme). One of the themes identified through the analysis was a higher incidence of issues relating to infection prevention and control systems and processes.

This month we published revised guidelines on infection prevention and control, together with a self-audit tool that will help you ensure that your workplace is in a clean and hygienic state and you are taking the necessary practicable steps to prevent or minimise the spread of infection.

If there's one key thing that I would like you to do from this newsletter is to take a look at the self-audit tool on the Board's website and use it to see how well you comply with the Board's *Guidelines on infection prevention and control*.

There's an email address at the bottom of the first page of the tool and I'd encourage you to provide feedback.

Cathy Loughry

Chair, Podiatry Board of Australia



Registration standards

Revised CPD registration standard now in effect

The Board's revised continuing professional development (CPD) registration standard took effect on 1 December 2015. It was published in October to allow practitioners to become familiar with the requirements before it took effect.

The revised CPD registration standard applies to all registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons in Australia except those with non-practising registration. Practitioners will need to meet the obligations of the revised standard by the next registration renewal period on 30 November 2016.

The standard was revised after a scheduled review, which included public consultation.

There have been minimal changes to the standard. The number of hours of CPD that podiatrists and podiatric surgeons are required to complete each year has not changed and the categories of CPD are largely the same.

The Board has introduced a requirement that a minimum of five hours of CPD must be in an interactive setting with other practitioners, which can include Skype or videoconferencing.

The requirement for podiatrists to complete training that includes cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), management of anaphylaxis and use of an automated external defibrillator, and for podiatric surgeons to complete training in advanced life support, has been maintained. However, the Board has expanded the list of approved training organisations that can deliver the training to include a hospital and/or health service.

Updated FAQ have also been published along with new templates to assist you to plan and record your CPD activities.

For more information, see the news item on the Board's website.

Revised standard for PII arrangements published

A revised registration standard for professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements was published in December.

The **revised PII standard** will come in to effect on 1 July 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.

The key change in the revised PII standard is that the minimum amount of cover specified in the current standard (\$5 million) has been removed from the standard. The revised standard aims to take a more contemporary and flexible approach, and requires registrants who are taking out their own insurance to do an objective self-assessment, informed by policies provided by insurance providers, to ensure they have adequate and appropriate insurance arrangements or professional indemnity cover for their practice. There have also been some minor changes to the requirements relating to run-off and retroactive cover to avoid duplication and provide more clarity.

Practitioners will need to meet the obligations of the revised standard either:

- by the time they next renew their PII arrangements policy, **or**
- by their next renewal of registration after 1 October 2016, whichever is sooner.

The Board has also published updated FAQ for PII.

More information about the revised standard can be found on the [Professional indemnity insurance arrangements page](#) of the AHPRA website.

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.

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 that a requirement for minimum hours of practice has been introduced.

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

Revised guidelines on infection prevention and control were published in early March. The guidelines, which describe the obligations of registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons with respect to infection prevention and control, come into effect on 4 April 2016.

Effective infection prevention and control is central to providing high quality health 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.

There have been minimal changes to the guidelines. As is the case with the current guidelines for infection control, the revised guidelines 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 the best available evidence at the time they were written and they 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 published

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 use the self audit tool, which serves as a checklist to help practitioners 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.

All registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons are required to complete CPD as part of their registration. The Board encourages practitioners to reflect on their current understanding of infection prevention and control principles and how to apply them and to complete CPD in this area to ensure their knowledge and skills are current.

Audit

The Board's third practitioner audit has started. The audit will assess compliance with the registration standards for the profession. Registrants are selected at random for audit.

The Board has an [Audit page](#) on its website which provides comprehensive information about the audit process including guidance on the audit notice, what is being audited, what it means for you and contact details for the audit team and AHPRA customer service team that can assist you with any queries.

Registration renewal update

In the recent renewal period, 97.5% of podiatry registrants renewed their registration and 98% of these did so online. This high rate of online renewal reflects the trend for all renewing practitioners across the National Scheme.

The Board will publish its next quarterly data update soon. For previous updates on the registered workforce, visit the [Statistics](#) page on the Board's website.

National Scheme news

National drug screening protocol now in place

There are health practitioners with a history of substance misuse who have restrictions placed on their registration. These restrictions are generally designed to keep the public safe while the practitioner remains in practice.

When restrictions are placed on a health practitioner's registration, AHPRA monitors the practitioner to make sure they are complying with the restrictions. This process is referred to as 'monitoring and compliance'.

From November 2015, all health practitioners who have restrictions placed on their registration by their National Board as a result of past substance misuse will have routine quarterly hair testing, in addition to random urine testing. Routine hair testing provides additional information about the use of a wide range of drugs, over a longer time period. It therefore provides greater assurance to the Board that the practitioner is not impaired as a result of ongoing substance misuse.

The introduction of routine hair testing is based on expert advice about modern drug screening methods. Using contemporary scientific evidence and the advice of an expert panel, National Boards and AHPRA will manage the risk associated with practitioners with a history of substance misuse.

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

New video outlines objectives and role of the National Scheme

A new video (with an accompanying infographic) explaining the Australia-wide scheme that is in place to protect members of the public has recently been launched by AHPRA.

Aimed mainly at the community, the video outlines how AHPRA, working in partnership with the 14 National Boards, helps regulate Australia's 630,000-plus registered health practitioners through a national scheme.

[The video](#) explains how the National Scheme works and how patients are protected.

Both resources are available on the [What we do](#) page of the AHPRA website. The video can also be watched on AHPRA's [YouTube channel](#).

Employer obligations: new awareness campaign

AHPRA has published a [news item](#) that outlines employers' obligations, and has ads running on LinkedIn and Facebook. This is the first step in the campaign, with many more activities to follow, including direct mail, paid print advertising, and in-language advertising (for the public campaign).

The campaign will be rolled out in stages and has three target audiences and objectives:

1. Employers – check the [register](#) before employing someone, keep up to date with changes to registrations, make mandatory reports when required.
2. Practitioners – know your obligations as a registered health practitioner.
3. Public – check to see if your practitioner is registered.

More information is available in the AHPRA [news item](#).

State and territory summaries now available – annual report 2014/15

State and territory summaries of the annual report are now available on the [AHPRA website](#). The summaries provide a view of national data about our work to keep the public safe through a state or territory lens. We provide national comparisons to show how the state or territory compares with the national average and where possible, we provide two years of data, to identify and track trends over time.

More comprehensive data are in the [2014/15 annual report](#) of AHPRA and the National Boards which was published in November 2015. The annual report also includes more detailed profession-specific information.

Later this month, the 14 National Boards will publish individual profession profiles on the AHPRA website, with links on their own websites. Keep an eye out for the podiatry profession profile on the Podiatry Board's website.

Keep in touch with the Board

- Visit www.podiatryboard.gov.au for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines and FAQ. Visiting the website regularly is the best way to stay in touch with news and updates from the Board.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the [Enquiries](#) link on every web page under *Contact us*.
- For registration enquiries, call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 9275 9009 (for overseas callers).
- To update your contact details for important registration renewal emails and other Board updates, go to the AHPRA website: [Update contact details](#).
- Address mail correspondence to: Cathy Loughry, Chair, Podiatry Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001.