



Media release

10 November 2016

Infection prevention and control was a priority for the Podiatry Board of Australia in 2015/16

One of the areas of focus for the Podiatry Board of Australia in 2015/16 was to ensure podiatrists and podiatric surgeons comply with guidelines around the prevention and control of infection, according to information published by AHPRA today in its [2015/16 annual report](#).

The 2015/16 annual report by AHPRA and the national health practitioner boards is a comprehensive record of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the 12 months ending 30 June 2016.

An analysis by AHPRA of the 213 notifications about podiatrists and podiatric surgeons since the National Scheme began in 2010 revealed a relatively high incidence of issues relating to systems and processes for infection protection and control.

In response, to coincide with the publication of the Board's revised [Guidelines on infection prevention and control](#), the Board published a self-audit tool that practitioners can use to check whether their workplace hygiene complies with the revised guidelines.

'Patient safety is our number-one priority,' said Ms Catherine Loughry, Chair of the Podiatry Board of Australia. 'It's critical that practitioners make preventing and controlling infection an integral part of their day-to-day professional practice. The Board expects practitioners to practise in a way that maintains and enhances patient safety. Our guidelines and the self-audit tool help podiatrists and podiatric surgeons to do that.'

The past year saw three revised registration standards approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. Throughout the year, the Board worked to implement the revised standard for continuing professional development, which took effect on 1 December 2015, the revised standard for professional indemnity insurance arrangements, which took effect on 1 July 2016, and the revised recency of practice standard, which will take effect from 1 December 2016.

'By engaging closely with AHPRA, the profession and other agencies and stakeholders, we continue to improve registration standards, ensuring they are current and relevant to practitioners and work to protect the public,' said Ms Loughry.

More highlights of the past year include:

- **More health practitioners overall:** There were almost 20,000 more registrants in 2015/16 across the 14 regulated professions than there were last year, totalling 657,621 health practitioners nationally. Student registrations increased by more than 11,000 registrants year-on-year, totalling 153,710.
- **A simplified renewal process:** Online registration renewals reached a new high across all professions – with over 98% of all registrants renewing online and on time, making it easier for health practitioners to renew their registration each year.

- **Increased registration:** As of 30 June 2016, there were 4,655 registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons across Australia, an increase of 6.1% from the previous year.
- **Greater awareness of the National Scheme:** A nationwide campaign aimed at employers, practitioners and the general public rolled out across social media and in print advertising.
- **Growth in notifications:** There were 10,082 notifications received during the year across all 14 health professions, an increase of 19.7% nationally (representing 1.5% of the registration base). The top three notifier complaints related to clinical care (41.8%), medication issues (11.5%) and health impairment (10.7%). Just under half of all notifications were made by a patient, relative or member of the public. AHPRA closed 5,227 matters in the year.
- **Increased notifications about podiatrists and podiatric surgeons:** There were 57 notifications received about podiatrists and podiatric surgeons nationally in 2015/16 (including data from the Health Professional Councils Authority in NSW), an increase of 54.1% from the previous year. Notifications about this profession make up 0.7% of all notifications received by AHPRA (excluding HPCA).
- **Less than 2% of all statutory offence matters related to podiatry:** AHPRA received 26 new complaints about possible statutory offences by podiatrists and podiatric surgeons during the year, which constitute 1.9% of all statutory offence matters received across all professions in 2015/16. Almost all new matters related to advertising concerns.

For more data and information relating to the Podiatry Board of Australia in 2015/16, please see www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016. The report provides a nationwide snapshot of the work of AHPRA and the Boards and highlights a multi profession approach to risk-based regulation with a clear focus on ensuring that Australians have a safe and competent health workforce.

‘The regulation of over 660,000 registered health practitioners across 14 health professions and eight states and territories is an important task,’ said AHPRA CEO Mr Martin Fletcher. ‘There are many things to consider in regulation – but there is only one main focus, and that is public safety.’

Supplementary tables that break down data across categories such as registrations, notifications, statutory offences, tribunals and appeals, and monitoring and compliance can also be found on the annual report website.

In the coming months, AHPRA and the National Boards will also publish summaries of our work regulating health practitioners in every state and territory, which will be released in late 2016. Expanded, profession-specific summaries will also be released and progressively published from early 2017.

For more information

- Visit www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016
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