

Communiqué

August 2018 meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia

The 97th meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia (the Board), was held on 24 August National AHRA office in Melbourne.

This communiqué outlines the issues and decisions from this meeting and other points of interest.

We publish this communiqué on our website and email it to a broad range of stakeholders. Please forward it to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

August meeting

The Board was pleased to receive a presentation from Michael Gorton AM, Chair of the Agency Management Committee, who spoke about the strategic priorities of the Scheme, and the continuing work on the experience of both notifiers and practitioners about whom a complaint is made in the Scheme.

Advertising update – selectively editing reviews or testimonials may break the law

AHPRA has issued more guidance for advertisers to make it clearer that selectively editing reviews is not acceptable.

Under the National Law¹, testimonials about clinical care are not permitted, but reviews about non-clinical aspects of care are allowed.

In a recent case, an advertiser removed all negative comments from patients' reviews. This selective editing changed the meaning of the reviews and had the potential to mislead the public. AHPRA's new guidance makes it clear this is not acceptable and outlines the rules about editing or moderating reviews. It is misleading to:

- edit a review that is negative to make it positive, as this falsely presents the feedback
- edit a review that has a mix of negative and positive comments so that the published review only has positive comments, as this falsely implies that the reviewer only had positive feedback, or
- edit a review so that it no longer accurately reflects all the reviewer's feedback and presents an inaccurate or false impression of the reviewer's views.

Reviews influence consumers healthcare choices so advertisers must make sure reviews are genuine and not misleading.

The way advertisers moderate and publish reviews must comply with the National Law and the [Australian Consumer Law](#).

The updated [testimonial tool](#) is available in the *Advertising resources* section on the AHPRA website.

For more information, access the [Advertising resources](#) on the AHPRA website.

¹ The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

AHPRA to conduct pilot audit on advertising compliance in early 2019

A pilot audit to check health practitioner compliance with advertising requirements will be conducted by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) in early 2019.

Random audits of advertising compliance will advance a risk-based approach to enforcing the National Law's¹ advertising requirements and facilitate compliance by all registered health practitioners who advertise their services.

The National Boards for chiropractic and dental are taking part in the pilot audit.

The pilot audit has been modelled on the well established approach to auditing compliance with core registration standards and involves adding an extra declaration about advertising compliance when chiropractors and dental practitioners apply for renewal of registration in 2018. (The National Law enables a National Board to require any other reasonable information² to be included with a renewal application.)

The pilot will not delay a decision on the application for renewal.

The audit will be carried out by AHPRA's Advertising Compliance Team from January 2019 and will involve a random sample of chiropractors and dental practitioners who renewed their registration in 2018.

One of the audit's main objectives is to analyse the rate of advertising compliance for those health practitioners who advertise and who have not been the subject of an advertising complaint in the past 12 months.

A pilot audit report including data analysis and recommendations will be prepared for National Boards to consider the pilot outcomes and implications for future compliance work.

For information about your advertising obligations see the advertising resources page at www.ahpra.gov.au/Publications/Advertising-resources.aspx.

Stakeholder engagement breakfast in Hobart in October

The Board is hosting another information sharing breakfast for physiotherapists and others on Saturday, 6 October in Hobart. The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) annual conference is being that week in Hobart and the Board is inviting all conference goers and Tasmanian physiotherapists to the breakfast, which is an opportunity to meet Board members, before the conference gets under way.

Are your contact details up-to-date?

It is important your contact details are up-to-date to receive renewal reminders from AHPRA and information from the Board. You can check your details via the [Login icon](#) at the top right of the AHPRA website. Email accounts need to be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

Follow AHPRA on social media

Connect with AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to receive information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



Further information

We publish a range of information about registration and our expectations of registered physiotherapists on our website at www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more information or help with questions about your registration, please send a web enquiry form or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Charles Flynn

Communiqué

Chair
2 September 2018