

Welcome to the Physiotherapy Board of Australia's July 2012 newsletter.

Endorsement for acupuncture for physiotherapists

The Physiotherapy Board of Australia has developed a fact sheet to inform physiotherapists about their obligations in relation to acupuncture, which is available from the website (www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au) in the *Codes and Guidelines* section.

From 1 July 2012, the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), will limit the use of the title 'acupuncturist' nationally (it is already a protected title in Victoria). From this date only registered Chinese medicine practitioners, or practitioners whose registration has been endorsed as being qualified to practice acupuncture, may hold themselves out as being acupuncturists. Without such registration or endorsement, it will be an offence for physiotherapists in any part of Australia to take or use the title 'acupuncturist'.

There are provisions under the National Law for endorsements and the Physiotherapy Board of Australia is establishing its requirements for an acupuncture endorsement for physiotherapists. In the meantime, the fact sheet explains how the restrictions on the use of the title acupuncturist apply to physiotherapists and the current pathways to an acupuncture endorsement.

New limited registration standards for overseas-trained physiotherapists

Three new limited registration standards were published this month by the Board: *Limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice*, *Limited registration in public interest*, and *Limited registration for teaching or research*.

The standards are accompanied by new *Supervision guidelines for physiotherapy* and special transitional arrangements that ensure that overseas-trained physiotherapists are not disadvantaged by the new requirements.

The new registration standards were developed after extensive public consultation and were recently approved by Australian health ministers.

Under the new requirements, overseas-trained physiotherapists applying to register for the first time are required to seek limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice. Overseas-trained physiotherapists who currently hold limited registration in the public interest need to change their registration category to limited registration for supervised practice at their next registration renewal.

Snapshot of registered workforce

There are 23,301 physiotherapists registered in Australia, according to new Board data released in May.

The Board published the first quarterly data profiling Australia's physiotherapy workforce, including a number of statistical breakdowns about registrants such as state/territory, age and gender by registration type.

State	General	Limited			Non-practising	Total	% By State
		Postgrad / training	Public Interest	Teaching / research			
ACT	419	3	2		12	436	1.87%
NSW	6,585	20	16	4	195	6,820	29.27%
NT	139					139	0.6%
QLD	4,218	15	3	2	69	4,307	17.48%
SA	1,838	42	12		15	1,907	8.18%
TAS	384	1	3		6	394	1.69%
VIC	5,454	35	41	3	196	5,729	24.59%
WA	2,667	17	2		49	2,735	11.74%
Not Stated	736	7		2	89	834	3.58%
Total	22,440	140	79	11	631	23,301	

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme) requires that information about every registered health practitioner in Australia is published on

a single national register of practitioners. As a result, it is now possible to produce accurate reports on the number of practitioners registered in each profession in Australia. It is one of the significant added values of national registration and is of enormous value for workforce planning and to help improve access to health services.

Find the Physiotherapy Board of Australia's statistics in the About section of its website.

Social media policy

The Physiotherapy Board of Australia will shortly release a draft policy on social media for consultation. The draft policy, which has been agreed for consultation by all National Boards, confirms that health practitioners must abide by the relevant laws, their National Board's *Code of conduct*, and the *Guidelines for the advertising of regulated health services* when they use social media. Registered health practitioners should only post information on social media that:

- does not breach professional obligations
- does not breach confidentiality and privacy obligations (such as discussing patients or posting pictures of procedures, case studies, patients or sensitive material)
- presents information in an unbiased, evidence informed context
- does not make unsubstantiated claims, and/or
- does not use testimonials or purported testimonials in any capacity on any medium.

Watch the News and Updates section of the Board website for the opening of the consultation.

Students urged to apply online for a smooth path from study to work

Students about to graduate as physiotherapists are being urged to go online to apply early for registration and smooth the path from study to work.

Last month the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) launched online registration for final year students. The online graduate registration service enables students to apply for registration early before they complete their course.

Final year students about to graduate are urged to go online and apply for registration four to six weeks before completing their course. This will make the path from

study to work a smooth one as graduating students need to be registered in their health profession before they can start work.

More information is available on AHPRA's Graduate Applications webpage.

Smaller certificates equals smaller environmental footprint

When renewing registration, practitioners will notice that their certificate of registration is now A5 size and is accompanied by a wallet-sized card with their registration details. The change has been made to halve the amount of paper used for this purpose. The content and style of the certificate remains unchanged.

For more information

- Visit www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines and FAQs
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the Enquiries link on the bottom of every page
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (for overseas callers)
- Address mail correspondence to: Mr Glen Ruscoe, Chair, Physiotherapy Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne, Victoria 3001

