Welcome to the Physiotherapy Board of Australia's July 2013 newsletter.

Notifications guides published

In June, AHPRA published new guides for health practitioners and the community about how notifications are managed in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). The guide for practitioners and a series of fact sheets aim to explain to practitioners what happens when AHPRA receives a notification on behalf of a National Board. The information complements the direct correspondence that individuals receive if a notification is made about them.

AHPRA collaborated with the professional associations for practitioners registered in the National Scheme to develop the guide for practitioners. The practitioners' guide clearly explains what happens after a concern has been raised about a health practitioner, who decides what happens, how we work with health complaints entities and what practitioners can expect from our processes.

AHPRA has also developed a guide for the community about making a complaint (or notification) about a health practitioner. This guide for notifiers, *Do you have a concern about a health practitioner? A guide for people raising a concern*, will be an early focus for feedback from the newly established Community Reference Group for AHPRA and the National Boards.

Both guides are published online on the AHPRA and National Boards websites in a wholly revised section on complaints and notifications.

Audit of registration standards

All registered practitioners are required to comply with a range of registration standards that have been developed by the Board that registers them. The registration standards are published on the National Board websites under *Registration standards*.

AHPRA is fine-tuning a process and tools to audit practitioner compliance with mandatory registration standards on behalf of National Boards. Each time a practitioner applies to renew their registration they must make a declaration that they have met the registration standards for their profession.

Practitioner audits are an important part of the way that National Boards and AHPRA can better protect the public by regularly checking these declarations for a random sample of practitioners. Audits help to make sure that practitioners are meeting the standards and provide important assurance to the community and the Boards.

AHPRA has undertaken two pilots to audit practitioners for compliance with three registration standards:

• continuing professional development

• professional indemnity insurance, and

• recency of practice.

AHPRA is also auditing compliance with requirements in the National Law for practitioners to provide information about their criminal history.

Audit pilots

An audit of a number of nurses and midwives was conducted during their renewal period in May this year. This group was audited against the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's registration standards for recency of practice and continuing professional development.

A report for phase one of the audit pilot, which was conducted with the pharmacy profession, is available on the AHPRA website at www.ahpra.gov.au. The report describes AHPRA's approach to auditing practitioner compliance with the National Boards' registration standards and provides valuable information for the development of practitioner audits in the National Scheme.

Using the findings from the first phase of the audit pilot, practitioners from the pharmacy, chiropractic and optometry professions were selected at random to be audited for compliance with their Board's registration standards and the provisions in the National Law to disclose criminal history. This was phase two of the pilot. The report about this is being finalised and will be available shortly.

During both phases of the pilots, AHPRA and the relevant National Boards worked with key stakeholders. This was to make sure that participants would be able to get the necessary evidence to give to the audit team, for example to demonstrate their recent practice and their participation in CPD. Accepted evidence varied for each profession and each registration standard, but examples include signed statements of service from employer(s) noting hours worked, a CV detailing dates of employment, CPD logs, and copies of current insurance certificates.

Next steps

Outcomes from both phases of the audit will inform the next steps in refining the audit framework to be applied across all professions. Auditing of other professions will then begin.

We have now established a working group to support the transition from pilot to permanent business function. We will keep stakeholders up to date with detailed information on the audit page on the AHPRA website.

AHPRA and all National Boards are working to make sure practitioners are prepared, informed and supported if they are audited. We will also be working and consulting with unions, professional associations and large employers as we make random audit routine in the National Scheme.

Consultation update

The National Boards are continuing their scheduled three-year review of the registration standards, codes and guidelines, in addition to undertaking their ongoing Board-specific consultations.

Consultation is an important part of the National Boards' engagement with practitioners, members of the public and other stakeholders. The feedback provided is greatly valued, and informs Boards' development of important documents. Public consultations are widely communicated in the Board communiqués and websites, and are open to everyone.

Upcoming cross-Board public consultations

• *English language skills registration standard* (which is largely common to all National Boards), and

• *Criminal history registration standard* (which is common to all National Boards).

All National Boards have registration standards which define the requirements that applicants, registrants or students need to meet to be registered. These two registration standards are common, or largely common, to all National Boards.

The review of these two standards is being coordinated across all National Boards later in 2013.

Recently closed consultations

Cross-Board public consultation on common guidelines and *Code of conduct* has closed. This consultation included revisions to the *Guidelines for advertising* (common to all National Boards), a *Social media policy* (common to all National Boards), and revisions to the *Guidelines for mandatory notifications* (common to all National Boards).

Most Boards, including the Physiotherapy Board of Australia, also consulted on a revised *Code of conduct* (either the code shared by most National Boards, or for some Boards there is a profession-specific code).

For information on the outcomes of these consultations, visit the Board website: www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au.

Snapshot of the registered workforce

In March, the Board published its fifth data summary profiling Australia's physiotherapy workforce, including a number of statistical breakdowns about registrants. These include state/territory, age and gender by registration type.

These latest data show there are 24,502 physiotherapists registered in Australia, of whom 706 are non-practising. The number of practitioners has risen by 198 since the last data update was released in January this year.

Physiotherapists: State and territory by registration type

State	General	Limited			Non-practising	Total	% By State
		Postgraduate training or supervised practice	Public interest	Teaching or research			
ACT	449		2		9	460	1.88%
NSW	6,863	31	6	4	227	7,131	29.1%
NT	151	1			1	153	0.62%
QLD	4,412	30	2	2	86	4,532	18.5%
SA	1,925	38	3		16	1,982	8.09%
TAS	389	2			7	398	1.62%
VIC	5,719	65	8	2	196	5,990	24.45%
WA	2,892	32	1	1	59	2,985	12.18%
Not Stated	753	10		3	105	871	3.55%
Total	23,553	209	22	12	706	24,502	

Physiotherapists: Age by registration type

State	General	Limited			Non-practising	Total	% By State
		Postgraduate training or supervised practice	Public interest	Teaching or research			
21 - 25	2,540	14	1		11	2,566	10.47%
26 - 30	4,759	102	10	1	82	4,954	20.22%
31 - 35	3,880	69	7	2	103	4,061	16.57%
36 - 40	2,886	13	1	4	117	3,021	12.33%
41 - 45	2,519	8	2	2	103	2,634	10.74%
46 - 50	2,127	3	1	2	74	2,207	9.01%
51 - 55	2,035				62	2,097	8.56%
56 - 60	1,570				46	1,616	6.6%
61 - 65	733			1	41	775	3.16%
66 - 70	340				41	381	1.55%
71 - 75	114				15	129	0.53%
76 - 80	31				9	40	0.16%
81 - 85	7				2	9	0.04%
86 +	3					3	0.01%
Not Stated	9					9	0.04%
Total	23,553	209	22	12	706	24,502	

For further details, visit the _About>Statistics_ section of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia's website.

Community Reference Group established

AHPRA has established a Community Reference Group (CRG) to work with AHPRA and the National Boards. This is the first time a national group of this kind, with a focus on health practitioner regulation, has been established in Australia. Seven members from the community, who are not health practitioners, have been appointed to the group, which will be chaired by Mr Paul Laris, a community member on two Boards in the National Scheme.

The CRG will have a number of roles, including providing feedback, information and advice on strategies for building better knowledge in the community about health practitioner regulation, but also advising AHPRA on how to better understand, and most importantly, meet, community needs.

AHPRA and the National Boards believe that the Community Reference Group is an important step to increasing community input into health practitioner regulation.

'Health practitioner regulation affects everyone, because it is about public safety. But not many people are aware of how it works or what it does,' AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher said.

'The Community Reference Group will work with the 14 National Boards and AHPRA and advise us how we can build community awareness, understanding and support for the Australia's regulatory scheme for health practitioners,' he said.

Mr Paul Laris, Chair, said the group's establishment was timely. 'The national regulatory scheme is firmly in place. There are already community members on all National Boards, and this new advisory group will give another voice to the wider community,' Mr Laris said.

Communiqués from meetings of the Community Reference Group will be published on the AHPRA website. A list of members is published in a media statement.

Data exchange strengthens health workforce planning

A renewed commitment to timely information-sharing and constructive engagement is the feature of the partnership between AHPRA, Health Workforce Australia (HWA) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). Each organisation has statutory obligations to share information that aims to improve health workforce policy and planning in Australia.

In May 2012, the three parties signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) outlining how national health workforce registration data would be shared, consistent with the National Law. Reviewing the MoU in June 2013, the parties affirmed that it continued to provide a clear and appropriate framework for the agreement between them.

The AIHW and HWA welcomed the establishment of an AHPRA data quality team and were briefed on AHPRA's strategic plan to safeguard data quality.

'The data collected by AHPRA through the National Scheme creates common information across professions and jurisdictions – in effect it ensures we are comparing apples with apples, statistically speaking,' AIHW CEO David Kalisch said.

For more information

- Visit www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines and FAQ.

- 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 Paul Shinkfield, Chair, Physiotherapy Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne, VIC 3001.

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