

Communiqué

Fifth meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

16 November 2011

At its fifth meeting, held in Melbourne, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (the Board) continued to focus on preparing for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice profession to join the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme from 1 July 2012.

Proposed registration standards

It is anticipated that the Board's proposed registration standards, which were recently the subject of consultation, will shortly be considered for approval by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. These standards specify the Board's requirement for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, and the requirements for:

- English language skills
- Criminal history
- Professional indemnity insurance
- Continuing professional development (CPD)
- Recency of practice
- Grandparenting provisions

Once they have been approved by the Australia Health Workforce Ministerial Council, the final standards will be available at <http://www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/>

Update on codes and guidelines

The Board expects to release a draft consultation paper on three codes and guidelines that are common to all of the national boards shortly. The consultation paper will seek feedback on:

- *A code of conduct for the profession*—addressing issues such as: providing good care; effective communication; confidentiality and privacy; informed consent; adverse events and open disclosure; maintaining professional boundaries; health records; conflicts of interest; and financial and commercial dealings.
- *Guidelines on mandatory reporting*—explaining the type of situations which require a health practitioner, an employer or an education provider to notify the Board through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) about another registered health practitioner's misconduct. The criteria around misconduct which is outlined in the *Health Practitioner National Law Act 2009* relates to activities which place the public at significant risk of harm such as practising when intoxicated, sexual misconduct, impairment and practising in a way which significantly departs from accepted professional standards.
- *Guidelines on Advertising*—including what is acceptable advertising, such as factual statements about the services a profession provides, and what is unacceptable advertising, such as not disclosing risks associated with a treatment and creating unreasonable expectations. These guidelines also detail how to make a complaint about a breach of the advertising guidelines and are common across all National Boards.

The Board encourages all interested stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposed codes and guidelines. Comments will be due by close of business on 9 January 2012 and

the consultation paper will be available from 21 November 2011 at <http://www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/News/Consultations.aspx>.

Registration Fees

The Board is in the process of setting registration fees. The profession will be notified of fee levels on the Board website once they have been finalised.

Registration Transition Arrangements

The Board considered how it will communicate with registered and unregistered practitioners in the lead up to the commencement of national registration for the profession. During this period, the Board will work closely with the Aboriginal Health Workers Board of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory office of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

Those practitioners who are not currently required to be registered are being encouraged to apply for national registration by 31 March 2012 to allow enough time for applications to be processed.

All practitioners who are currently registered with the Aboriginal Health Workers Board of the Northern Territory will automatically transfer to the new national system on 1 July 2012. These practitioners will receive a letter from AHPRA towards the end of April, detailing the transition process, advising them of their personal registration status, and outlining what is required of them to ensure a safe transition to the national scheme.

Those who are currently registered are also encouraged to make sure that their contact details are correct and up to date with the Aboriginal Health Workers Board of the Northern Territory, as this information will be transferred to the national scheme.

Practitioners who are not currently registered in the Northern Territory, but who work in a clinical role and have the relevant qualification, will need to check with their employer well before 1 July 2012 to see if they will need to be registered. Practitioners who are not required to be registered but have the relevant qualification and meet the Board's other registration requirements may also still choose to be registered. This may include registration under the Grandfathering standards.

Further information on the registration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners is available on 1300 419 495

Peter Pangquee

Chair

21 November 2011