



Fact sheet: Acupuncture

September 2013

Endorsement for acupuncture for physiotherapists

Background

This fact sheet has been developed to inform physiotherapists about their obligations in relation to performing acupuncture.

Physiotherapists are regulated by the Physiotherapy Board of Australia under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (National Law).

Under the National Law, a National Board, including the Physiotherapy Board of Australia, may endorse the registration of a registered health practitioner qualified to practise as an acupuncturist if:

- the practitioner has an approved qualification or what the Board considers a substantially equivalent qualification, and
- the practitioner complies with an approved registration standard.

Endorsement of registration for physiotherapists

The Physiotherapy Board of Australia (the National Board) has not developed a pathway for the endorsement of the registration of physiotherapists for acupuncture.

What this means for physiotherapists

- Physiotherapists who use the title 'acupuncturist' must apply for registration with the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia.
- Physiotherapists must be careful not to breach the requirements of the National Law.

Using/taking the title 'Acupuncturist'

Since 1 July 2012, the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia is the responsible Board for registering Chinese medicine practitioners, including acupuncturists. From 1 July 2012, it became an offence under the National Law for physiotherapists in Australia to take or use the title 'acupuncturist' if they are not registered with the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia.

Practising Dry Needling and Acupuncture

The restriction on the use of the title 'acupuncturist' does not mean that physiotherapists currently practising acupuncture, dry needling or other techniques involving the use of needles need to cease those modalities. However, physiotherapists may not advertise or hold themselves out to be 'acupuncturists' without being registered with the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia.

Will an endorsement for acupuncture for physiotherapy be available?

The National Board has commenced consideration of the issues around the development of an endorsement for acupuncture in conjunction with other professions under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme that utilise needling practices. This may not result in a pathway to endorsement for acupuncture for physiotherapists with the National Board. However, if the National Board decides to pursue such a pathway, it is required under the National Law to undertake wide public consultation in relation to developing a relevant registration standard. The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council must also then approve the registration standard before it can be used.

Until such time as a registration standard for an endorsement for acupuncture is developed and approved, there is no pathway available with the National Board for physiotherapists to take or use the title 'acupuncturist', or to advertise or hold themselves out as 'acupuncturists'. Physiotherapists who wish to utilise these titles must apply for registration with the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia.

For more information

- Visit www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)