

Communiqué

The 59th meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 27 February 2015 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) national 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.

Happy New Year

This meeting was the first of the New Year and the National Board would like to extend best wishes to all stakeholders and partners for 2015. This year is shaping up again to be a busy one for the Board.

Registrant survey – released in March

We recently notified you that the Board would conduct a voluntary and anonymous email survey of registered physiotherapists. By conducting this survey, the Board aims to get a better understanding of physiotherapists' knowledge of their obligations under the National Law, and the areas on which it might need to provide more guidance.

The anonymous survey will be released to all physiotherapists via the Board's March electronic newsletter. The survey is not a test. It is voluntary and anonymous.

Look for the link to the survey in your electronic mailbox in March.

Physiotherapy March newsletter

The March 2015 edition of the Physiotherapy registrant newsletter will be forwarded electronically to all physiotherapists. If you do not receive your newsletter, please ensure that AHPRA holds your current and correct contact details. It is easy to update your contact details online and information on how is at the end of this communiqué.

2015 planning

The Board finalised its planning for the 2015/16 financial year. It is anticipated that the revised registration standards for continuing professional development (CPD), recency of practice and professional indemnity insurance (PII) will be considered by Ministers later this year. The Board is planning a series of activities to support implementation of the revised standards once approved.

Standards compliance audit

All health practitioners registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), are required to comply with a range of registration standards. These standards were developed after wide-ranging consultation and have been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council.

Last year the Board participated in its second audit of registration standard compliance. In the coming months, AHPRA will again be randomly selecting some physiotherapists to audit their compliance with the Board's registration standards.

An information pack will be sent to those selected for the audit. Additional information is available under *Registration* on the AHPRA website at www.ahpra.gov.au.

New approach to international criminal history checks

The Board noted a new procedure for checking international criminal history to provide greater public protection is being implemented by all National Boards and AHPRA as of 4 February 2015.

This new approach requires [certain applicants and practitioners](#) to apply for an international criminal history check from an AHPRA approved supplier and was first announced in November last year. The supplier will provide the international criminal history check report to the applicant and directly to AHPRA.

The new process for checking international criminal history aims to strike a balance between public safety and regulatory burden for practitioners. More information is in the [media release](#) on the AHPRA website.

National drug screening protocol strengthened

Mandatory hair testing for all registered health practitioners with substance-related impairment will now be routine in a move by AHPRA and the National Boards to strengthen the national drug screening protocol.

Under the protocol, all health practitioners who have restrictions on their registration linked to past substance abuse will have routine hair testing in addition to urine testing. Routine hair testing helps provide comprehensive information about the use – over time - of a wide range of drugs (not just based on the practitioner's drug taking history).

National Boards will continue to make decisions about individual practitioners with impairment case by case, based on testing standards set out in the protocol.

The drug screening protocol is part of a wider, national strategy to effectively manage compliance and monitoring across the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The strategy has been progressively implemented from July 2014. More information is in the [media release](#) on the AHPRA website.

Student presentation

The Board has published a presentation for use by education providers and other interested parties to help explain registration requirements for physiotherapists under the National Law¹. The Powerpoint presentation is free to [download from the Board's website](#). It is ideally suited to students nearing completion of their studies and who are preparing for their careers as registered physiotherapists in Australia.

Updating contact details

To check or update your contact details, go to the online services panel for practitioners on the homepage of the Board's website and click on the relevant link. Enter your user ID, date of birth and password to access your account. Please note that your user ID is not your registration number. If you cannot remember your user ID or password, contact us [online](#) or call 1300 419 495.

Follow @AHPRA on Twitter

AHPRA uses [Twitter](#) to encourage greater discussion about National Board consultations and to host regular Twitter chats on important topics.

Conclusion

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.

Paul Shinkfield

Chair
5 March 2015

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