



Media release

10 November 2016

Consistency, efficiency and effectiveness were key to the Physiotherapy Board of Australia protecting the public in 2015/16

The Physiotherapy Board of Australia's focus in 2015/16 was consistency, efficiency and effectiveness in undertaking the Board's regulatory role, according to information published by AHPRA today in its [2015/16 annual report](#).

The 2015/16 annual report by AHPRA and the national health practitioner boards is a comprehensive record of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the 12 months ending 30 June 2016.

'Public safety is our number-one priority,' said Dr Charles Flynn, Presiding Member of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia. 'During the past year we continued to refine our regulatory approach, working closely with stakeholders to ensure requirements are clear.'

The Board took part in cross-professional work within the scheme, such as the commencement of the review of supervision guidelines, and commenced discussions with other National Scheme professions, around non-health practitioner prescribing.

'Whether physiotherapist prescribing becomes a reality will depend on many factors, including the value to the public and unequivocal safety of the community,' said Dr Flynn.

The Board's appointed accreditation authority, the Australian Physiotherapy Council, continued the process of review of the *Approved accreditation standard*.

More highlights of the past year include:

- **More health practitioners overall:** There were almost 20,000 more registrants in 2015/16 across the 14 regulated professions than there were last year, totalling 657,621 health practitioners nationally. Student registrations increased by more than 11,000 registrants year-on-year, totalling 153,710.
- **A simplified renewal process:** Online registration renewals reached a new high across all professions – with over 98% of all registrants renewing online and on time, making it easier for health practitioners to renew their registration each year.
- **Increased registration:** As of 30 June 2016, there were 28,855 physiotherapists registered across Australia, an increase of 4.8% from the previous year. .
- **Greater awareness of the National Scheme:** A nationwide campaign aimed at employers, practitioners and the general public rolled out across social media and in print advertising.
- **Growth in notifications:** There were 10,082 notifications received during the year across all 14 health professions, an increase of 19.7% nationally (representing 1.5% of the registration base). The top three notifier complaints related to clinical care (41.8%), medication issues (11.5%) and health impairment (10.7%). Just under half of all notifications were made by a patient, relative or member of the public. AHPRA closed 5,227 matters in the year.

- **Increased notifications about physiotherapists:** There were 102 notifications received about physiotherapists nationally in 2015/16 (including data from the Health Professional Councils Authority in NSW), an increase of 5.2% from the previous year. However, the profession remains low risk when compared to other registered professions.
- **Less than 5% of all statutory offence matters related to physiotherapy:** AHPRA received 66 new complaints about possible statutory offences by physiotherapists in the past year, which constitute 4.9% of all statutory offence matters received across all professions in 2015/16. Almost all new matters related to the use of protected titles or advertising concerns.

For more data and information relating to the Physiotherapy Board of Australia in 2015/16, please see www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016. The report provides a nationwide snapshot of the work of AHPRA and the Boards and highlights a multi profession approach to risk-based regulation with a clear focus on ensuring that Australians have a safe and competent health workforce.

‘The regulation of over 660,000 registered health practitioners across 14 health professions and eight states and territories is an important task,’ said AHPRA CEO Mr Martin Fletcher. ‘There are many things to consider in regulation – but there is only one main focus, and that is public safety.’

Supplementary tables that break down data across categories such as registrations, notifications, statutory offences, tribunals and appeals, and monitoring and compliance can also be found on the annual report website.

In the coming months, AHPRA and the National Boards will also publish summaries of our work regulating health practitioners in every state and territory, which will be released in late 2016. Expanded, profession-specific summaries will also be released and progressively published from early 2017.

For more information

- Visit www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016
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