

Communiqué

November 2016 meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia

The 80th meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 25 November 2016 in the National AHPRA 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.

Ministerial appointments to the Board

Paul Shinkfield's resignation as Chair in December 2015 created a vacancy for a Tasmanian practitioner and Chair. The Board was pleased to learn that Health Ministers have appointed a new Tasmanian practitioner member to the Board, Mr Lachlan Mortimer. Lachie will join his first Board meeting in December. Ministers also decided to appoint me as Chair for a term of three years and, after acting as Presiding Member since December 2015, I am pleased to accept this appointment.

Planning for 2017/18

The Board has conducted its planning session for the 2017/18 year. Themes considered by the Board included cross professional activities, analysis of risk in physiotherapy practice, reconciliation action planning, workforce development and stakeholder engagement.

2015/16 National Scheme annual report

AHPRA and the National Boards have released their 2015/16 annual report on the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme), providing a comprehensive record of the operations of the National Scheme for the 12 months ending 30 June 2015. The report provides a national snapshot of the work and finances of the National Scheme and is tabled in the parliaments of each state and territory and the Commonwealth.

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.

Guidance issued on endorsements in relation to scheduled medicines

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (the Ministerial Council) has recently endorsed *Guidance for National Boards: Applications to the Ministerial Council for approval of endorsements in relation to scheduled medicines under section 14 of the National Law*¹ (the Guidance).

The Guidance is designed to be used by National Boards when preparing applications to the Ministerial Council for approval of an endorsement for scheduled medicines for their profession.

The objectives of the Guidance are to:

- ensure robust, evidence-informed development and assessment of proposals for the use of scheduled medicines
- promote the safe and effective use of scheduled medicines
- facilitate common standards across professions for training and clinical practice with respect to the use of scheduled medicines, and/or
- facilitate nationally-consistent, core scheduled medicines authorities to enable innovation in health service delivery.

AHPRA and National Boards will be producing information for stakeholders to support the implementation of the Guidance. This is expected to be published in early 2017.

The Guidance is published on the AHPRA website, see the [Ministerial directives and communiqués](#).

Revised registration standard for recency of practice

The revised registration standard and guidelines for recency of practice requirements will both come into effect on 1 December 2016 and will replace the standard and guidelines that are currently in place.

This standard will apply to all registered physiotherapists except those with non-practising registration. Practitioners will need to meet the obligations of the revised standards by the time they renew their registration in 2017. Read more in the Board's [news item](#).

Renewal of registration – late applications

The renewal of registration period ended on 30 November 2016. Renewal applications received during December will incur a late payment fee. Under the National Law practitioners who do not renew their

¹ Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the Register of Physiotherapists. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise physiotherapy in Australia. A fast track application can be made (only during January), however the practitioner cannot practise until the application is processed and the national register is updated.

AHPRA has sent renewal reminders to physiotherapists who have provided an email address. See below on how to update your contact details.

Top tips for using the register of practitioners

The [national register of practitioners](#) is core to the work of AHPRA and the National Boards because it provides up-to-date information about every registered health practitioner, including physiotherapists. To help the public and employers get the most out of the register, we have developed [these tips](#). In particular, the tips remind anyone responsible for recruiting health practitioners how to use the register to verify a practitioner's registration status.

Are your contact details up-to-date?

It is important your contact details are up-to-date to receive renewal reminders from AHPRA and information from the Board. You can check your details via the [Login icon](#) at the top right of the AHPRA website. Email accounts need to be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

Follow @AHPRA on Twitter

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

Further information

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.

Charles Flynn

Chair

9 December 2016