



Communiqué

August 2019 meeting of the Dental Board of Australia

The 110th meeting of the Dental Board of Australia (the Board) was held on Friday 30 August 2019 in Melbourne at the offices of the Board's Accreditation Authority, the Australian Dental Council (ADC).

This meeting included a tour of the ADC's examination facilities as well as joint discussions about accreditation and policy issues.

This communiqué highlights key discussions and considerations from the Board's meeting, as well as other relevant information.

We publish this communiqué on our website and email it to a broad range of stakeholders. We encourage you to distribute it to colleagues and interested parties, including in the organisation you work.

Scope of practice update

Health Ministers referred the Board's proposed revised *Scope of practice registration standard* (the standard) to the [Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care](#) (the Commission) in March 2019. The purpose of the referral was for the Commission to independently assess the patient quality, patient safety implications and the consumer benefit of the revised standard. The Commission reported back to Health Ministers in July 2019.

The Board is continuing its engagement work to support the implementation of the proposed revised registration standard and will keep dental practitioners informed as this work progresses, including on the work of the commission.

Supply of medicine by dentists

The Board has received correspondence from the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) raising concerns about a dental supply business promoting the dispensing of medicines by dentists. The company's website encourages dentists to increase direct dispensing to patients to both improve patient experience and also for commercial benefit.

Dentists; authorised by their respective state and territory drug and poisons legislation and acting in the lawful practice of their profession; may administer, possess, prescribe or supply Schedule 4 or 8 medicines.

Supply, for a controlled or restricted drug often means, give, or offer to give a person one or more treatment doses of the drug, to be taken by the person during a certain period.

Dispense, usually means to supply in accordance with a prescription. The Pharmacy Board of Australia, in its guidelines, defines dispensing as: 'The review of a prescription and the preparation, packaging, labelling, record keeping and transfer of the prescribed medicine including counselling to a patient, their agent, or another person who is responsible for the administration of the medicine to that patient.'

The PSA's correspondence is an alert for dentists to exercise their professional and ethical obligations when prescribing and supplying medicines. These obligations, set out in the Code of Conduct, include:

- ensuring the care of the patient is the primary concern for health professionals in clinical practice
- providing treatment options based on the best available information and not influenced by financial gain or incentives
- conforming to the legislation in the relevant states and territories, including about self-prescribing

- maintaining adequate records, including being mindful of additional informed consent requirements when supplying or prescribing products not approved or made in Australia.

Important consultations now open – feedback invited

Four public consultations are now open asking for people to have their say on revised guidance to help practitioners and others understand their obligations about:

- mandatory notifications
- blood born viruses
- advertising a regulated health service, and
- a responsive and risk-based approach to supervised practice

The Board is conducting the consultations alongside other National Boards and AHPRA on:

- revised *Guidelines: Mandatory notifications about registered health practitioners* and *Guidelines: Mandatory notifications about health students*
- revised *Guidelines on advertising regulated health services*, and
- a proposed *Supervised practice framework*.

The Board, in partnership with the Medical, Nursing and Midwifery, Paramedicine and Podiatry Boards of Australia, has also recently opened consultation on the draft *Guidelines for registered health practitioners and students in relation to blood-borne viruses*. The draft guidelines direct practitioners in these professions to comply with the Communicable Diseases Network Australia *Australian national guidelines for the management of healthcare workers living with blood-borne viruses and healthcare workers who perform exposure-prone procedures at risk of exposure to blood-borne viruses*.

The Board invites dental practitioners and other stakeholders to provide feedback to these important public consultations. The closing dates for public consultation have been staggered to enable everyone an opportunity to respond. The closing dates are as follows:

- Public consultation on the guidelines for registered health practitioners and students in relation to blood-borne viruses will close on **1 November 2019**.
- Public consultation on the mandatory notifications guidelines will close on **6 November 2019**.
- Public consultation on the advertising guidelines will close on **26 November 2019**.
- Public consultation on the supervised practice framework will close on **17 December 2019**.

The consultation papers are available on the [Consultations page](#) the Board's website.

New practitioner experience video launched

Keep perspective; and seek help. That's the message in the [latest video](#) released by AHPRA and the National Boards as part of the '[Let's talk about it](#)' series – *Putting it in perspective: A practitioner's notifications experience*.

The video is the second practitioner experience video published this year, providing a health practitioner's first-hand account of the notification process.

The video series aims to share practitioners' experiences, recognising what are common reactions, while proactively encouraging them to focus on likely outcomes and seek support.

Many practitioners have told us that they would have benefited greatly from hearing the voice of others who had gone through the notifications experience — and come out the other side.

We understand that many practitioners who are subject to a notification may fear losing their registration. However, many notifications end without the need for regulatory action and are often closed following initial assessment, without the need for an extended investigation.

In the video, a surgeon describes his feelings of guilt and anxiety after a poor patient outcome and the notification that followed. As time went on, his worries increased, and he found it difficult to maintain a realistic perspective about what was likely to occur. He reflects on the value of speaking with family and friends, as well as the ongoing support of his GP and a psychologist.

Read the full [media release](#).

Are your contact details up to date?

It is important that 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.

Conclusion

The National Board publishes a range of information about registration and the National Board's expectations of practitioners on its website at www.dentalboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more information or help with questions about your registration, please send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Dr Murray Thomas

Chair, Dental Board of Australia

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