

Communiqué

27 February 2018

The Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board) meets each month to consider and decide on any matters related to its regulatory function under the National Law¹ and within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

This communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board and matters regarding the National Scheme. Please forward it on to colleagues and employees who may be interested in its content.

Late applications accepted for National Board vacancies

Late applications for practitioner member vacancies on the Pharmacy Board will be accepted until 5pm on 9 March 2018.

The closing date has been extended to give registered practitioners a bit more time to express interest in being part of health practitioner regulation nationally. Pharmacists from the Northern and Australian Capital Territories (NT and ACT) are especially encouraged to apply.

Triennial (three-yearly) recruitment rounds are an opportunity for Australian Health Ministers to consider reappointments and new appointments; so that National Boards have the best mix of experience, new and diverse views that will help inform their regulatory decision-making.

More information about the vacancies and how to apply is on the [AHPRA website](#).

Codeine scheduling changes

Subsequent to the up scheduling of codeine which came into effect on 1 February 2018, the Board received a request from a stakeholder for advice about what pharmacists should do in the event they receive prescriptions for large quantities of combination analgesics containing codeine. The Board reminds pharmacists and stakeholders that in such circumstances, consideration should be given to the following:

- any legal requirements outlined in legislation relevant to pharmacy practice
- the training materials and other resources developed by the pharmacy professional associations and other organisations such as the Therapeutic Goods Administration (Codeine information hub)
- the profession's practice standards and guidelines, and
- the Board's [Code of conduct for pharmacists](#) (the Code) and guidelines for pharmacists published by the Board such as *Guideline 2 Dispensing precaution – safety of prescriptions* in the [Guidelines for dispensing of medicines](#).

Guideline 2 states: 'At all times the dispensing of a prescription or any other action taken by the pharmacist, must be consistent with the safety of the patient.' The guideline also outlines that professional judgement must be exercised by the pharmacist in deciding appropriate action to take and to consult the patient and the prescriber about any alternative options

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

available to the patient regarding their medication needs. The Code published by the Board, under the section titled 'Working with other practitioners' also highlights the importance of clear communication with other health practitioners.

The Board previously provided advice to pharmacists about the codeine scheduling changes in its [October 2017 newsletter](#).

Guide for National Boards on endorsement for scheduled medicines released

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) has released a guide for National Boards on endorsement for scheduled medicines.

In 2016 the Ministerial Council endorsed the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council's *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* (the AHMAC Guidance).

The AHMAC Guidance endorsed by the Ministerial Council is available on the AHPRA [website](#).

To support the implementation of the Guidance, AHPRA is publishing a supporting *Guide for National Boards*. The AHPRA Guide supports National Boards when developing a submission to the Ministerial Council seeking approval of a new or amended endorsement in relation to scheduled medicines under section 14 of the National Law.

The AHPRA Guide may also help National Boards' stakeholders in understanding the complexity and rigor of the process of developing a proposal for endorsement for scheduled medicines for a profession, from concept development to Ministerial Council approval. Stakeholders may use the AHPRA Guide for developing a concept to introduce an endorsement for a health profession or amend an existing one, including:

- the stakeholder engagement that needs to be carried out
- the key considerations for concept development, and
- the suggested activities that may be completed during concept development.

The AHPRA Guide is now available together with the AHMAC Guidance on the [Endorsement for scheduled medicines](#) section of the AHPRA website.

Self-assessment tool launched to help practitioners and advertisers

A self-assessment tool to help practitioners and advertisers check and correct their advertising so it complies with their professional and legal obligations has been launched.

The tool is easy to use and asks users to consider a number of questions about their advertising which can help them understand if it is in breach of the National Law. Advertisers' legal obligations are explained in the [Guidelines for advertising regulated health services](#).

The self-assessment tool is the latest in a series of [advertising resources](#) developed by AHPRA and National Boards for health practitioners, healthcare providers and other advertisers of regulated health services to use to help them comply with the law.

Advertising responsibly and within the law supports patients to receive accurate and reliable information about healthcare services that helps them make informed decisions about their healthcare choices.

This work is part of a broader strategy – an [Advertising compliance and enforcement strategy for the National Scheme](#) – which started last year. The strategy has met a number of its targets since its launch including clear, concise and helpful correspondence about advertising complaints and new resources such as a [summary of advertising obligations](#),

[frequently asked questions](#), tips on [words to be wary about](#) and examples of [compliant and non-compliant advertising](#).

The [self-assessment tool](#) is available in the *Advertising resources* section on the AHPRA website.

Assessment of pharmacy interns against the revised competency standards

The Board and the [Australian Pharmacy Council](#) (APC) jointly announced how the revised *National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists in Australia 2016* (the revised competency standards) will be implemented in the assessment of pharmacy interns.

The announcement included the following advice for current and future interns, intern training program (ITP) providers and other interested stakeholders.

The Board and APC have agreed that all pharmacy intern written and oral examinations conducted from 1 January 2019, as part of the Board's registration examination, will be based on the revised competency standards.

Until then, the 2010 competencies will continue to be the basis for the pharmacy intern written and oral examinations. This is to ensure natural justice and procedural fairness to all interns who start the internship process during 2018.

The APC is also providing separate advice to ITP providers, including that all ITP and workplace-based assessments in 2018 can continue to be based on the 2010 competencies to allow for a 12 month transition to activities and assessments based on the 2016 competencies from 1 January 2019.

Local insights, National Scheme: State and territory summaries published

Individual annual report summaries for each state and territory, offering insights into how the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme is operating across Australia, have been published.

Based on the AHPRA and National Boards annual report for 2016/17, the summaries are available online.

Information includes applications for registration by profession, outcomes of criminal history checks and segmentation of the registrant base by gender, profession and specialty.

Notifications information includes the number of complaints or concerns received by profession, types of complaint, matters involving immediate action, monitoring and compliance, panels and tribunals, and statutory offence complaints.

A number of National Board summaries have been published including the report *Pharmacy regulation at work in Australia 2016/17*.

Copies of reports can be downloaded from the 2016-17 Annual Report [microsite](#).

Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for pharmacists on its website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au. For more information about registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Scheme also refer to information published on www.ahpra.gov.au or send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

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.

New research framework launched to improve patient safety

In January, National Boards and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) published a research framework to help transform health practitioner regulation to improve patient safety.

[A research framework for the National Scheme: Optimising our investment in research](#) sets out the research priorities and principles for National Boards and AHPRA to focus their research efforts.

The framework includes the priority research areas of: defining harms and risks related to the practice of regulated health professions, regulatory taxonomy or classification scheme, risk factors for complaints and/or poor practitioner performance, evidence for standards, codes and/or guidelines, evaluating regulatory interventions, stakeholder satisfaction and engagement, work readiness and workforce capacity and distribution.

It has been published to provide a solid base to facilitate risk-based research and evaluation activities, with a clear focus on translating the outcomes of research into initiatives that will inform regulatory policy development and decision-making to maximise the public benefit.

Follow AHPRA on social media

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William Kelly
Chair, Pharmacy Board of Australia
27 February 2017

[The Pharmacy Board of Australia](#) is the regulator of pharmacists in Australia and acts to protect the public by ensuring that suitably qualified and competent pharmacists are registered. The Board is responsible for developing registration standards, codes and guidelines for pharmacists and managing notifications (complaints) about pharmacists and pharmacy students. The Board does this through its powers under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory, and the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The Board's work in regulating Australia's pharmacists in the public interest is underpinned by [regulatory principles](#), which encourage a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation.*

**Except in NSW and Qld which have co-regulatory arrangements.*