



Communiqué

22 December 2011

The Pharmacy Board of Australia met on 16 December 2011 at the national office of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) in Melbourne.

Renewal of registration

The national registration of just over 24,000 pharmacists across Australia was due to be renewed with the Pharmacy Board of Australia by 30 November 2011.

The Board is pleased to advise that 94 percent of pharmacists submitted their application for renewal of registration to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) on time. These pharmacists have either been registered until 30 November 2012 or their application is still in assessment.

Pharmacists who held general registration and who are awaiting confirmation that their registration has been renewed are still able to practise in the profession while their application is assessed. Their name remains listed on the national Register of Pharmacists.

Pharmacists who did not renew their registration by 30 November 2011 are now in the late period built into the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory. If these pharmacists wish to keep practising, they have until 31 December 2011 to apply to renew. Pharmacists can still do this online and will be charged a late payment fee in addition to the registration renewal fee.

AHPRA has sent reminders to pharmacists who must now renew in the late period and to date a further two percent of pharmacists have renewed in December.

Any pharmacist who does not contact AHPRA before close of business on 3 January 2012 must be removed from the national Register of Pharmacists. (The deadline to renew has been extended in line with AHPRA policy, as the due date falls on a weekend, followed by a public holiday).

The registration of any pharmacist who does not apply in time will lapse and they will not be able to practise pharmacy in Australia until a new application has been approved. Under the National Law, neither the National Board nor AHPRA have any discretion about this.

Pharmacists who miss the deadline have four weeks after this date to make a fast-track application for registration if they wish to keep practising. This is a new application for registration and will incur an application fee, a registration fee and a fast-track application fee. These pharmacists should note that they are not able to practise pharmacy until their fast-track registration application is approved.

Under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, all registered practitioners in the National Scheme are responsible for renewing their registration on time. Therefore it is important that pharmacists keep their contact details provided to AHPRA, including email address, current and up-to-date. This will help the Board and AHPRA in their efforts to communicate important information to pharmacists over the coming year, especially in the months leading up to the 2012 health practitioner renewal of registration (30 November 2012).

Practitioner audits

In January 2012, a sample group of pharmacists will be randomly selected for the Board's pilot audit of the following mandatory registration standards:

- criminal history (via CrimTrac)
- recency of practice
- continuing professional development and
- professional indemnity insurance.

Pharmacists will be notified that they are being audited in a letter, which also outlines what they need to do to comply. The audit will be conducted over a three month period. It will be a pilot for other health professions and will identify any areas where changes are necessary in the system. Further information and FAQs are available on the Board's website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards/Audit-Pilot.aspx.

Plans for 2012

The Board reviewed its work plan for 2012 and will meet in January to prepare for further guideline development and consultation, meetings in Hobart and Adelaide and ongoing work by its committees.

Compliments of the season

On behalf of the Pharmacy Board of Australia I extend best wishes and compliments of the season to all pharmacists and our stakeholders.

Stephen Marty
Chair
22 December 2011