



Joint Statement



12 November 2012

Do you know everything you need to know about your doctor?

You've been going to the same doctor for years now, perhaps the same Chinese medicine practitioner, physiotherapist or optometrist.¹

But have you ever stopped to check if they are registered properly or if there are conditions they must adhere to when practising?

Would you know who to turn to if you thought your care had been compromised, or you felt that the treatment you received was inappropriate or wrong?

While the Australian health system has significant consumer protections in place, it's still vital that members of the community know the standards they can expect from health practitioners and what to do if these standards are not met.

Consumers will be able to get a first-hand briefing from regulators and consumer representatives on the requirements health practitioners must meet and how to have a say in the future shape of health practitioner regulation in Australia.

A joint initiative of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF), the briefing aims to educate consumers about standards they can expect from a range of health professionals, and who to turn to if health professionals aren't meeting these standards.

AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher said national registration was good for the community because there are clear, nationally consistent standards health practitioners must meet.

"Two years ago major changes were made to registration across the country with the introduction – for the first time – of a single, national agency administering consistent standards set by National Boards," Mr Fletcher said.

"National registration also provides more information to consumers and tougher safeguards to improve public safety.

"Consumers now have access to a 'one stop shop' via the AHPRA website for information about their health practitioner, and to raise a concern or find out more about the standards their health practitioners must meet.

"It also ends decades of duplication, inconsistency and goes a long way to ensuring important information about health practitioners doesn't slip through the cracks when they move between jurisdictions and employers."

Consumers Health Forum of Australia CEO Carol Bennett said the briefing was a great opportunity for everyday consumers to get up close and personal with AHPRA, and find out more

¹ Health professions that are regulated in Australia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine practice, chiropractic, dental, medical, medical radiation practice, nursing and midwifery, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry and psychology.

about the health practitioner information they can access and who to approach if they have concerns.

“National registration and standardisation has been a major achievement in health reform over the last five years, however many consumers are still unaware of the protections provided by national regulation,” Ms Bennett said.

“For example, many consumers are unaware that their doctor, dentist, nurse, physiotherapist and chiropractor – among many other professions – must be registered to be allowed to practise.

“Consumers can check their health professional’s registration status, practice restrictions and many other details through a simple online search.

“It means consumers have direct, online access to important information about health practitioners, and have a single point of call to raise a concern about the quality or standard of healthcare they receive.

“I would urge anyone interested in learning more about AHPRA and the national regulation of local health professionals to come along to speak directly with AHPRA about how they can have a voice in health practitioner regulation.”

Community Briefings:

Online Webinar: 22 November, 11.00am – 12.30pm (AEDT)

Melbourne: 19 November, Noon – 1.30pm

Darwin: 23 November, 11.00am – 12.30pm

Adelaide: 30 November, 11.00am – 12.30pm

Hobart: 6 December, 11.00am – 12.30pm **(Cancelled)**

Canberra: 10 December, 11am – 12.30pm

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For more information, please visit – www.ourhealth.org.au

ENDS

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About AHPRA:

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) was established in 2010 and works in partnership with 14 National Boards. National regulation of health professionals is underpinned by nationally consistent legislation and covers more than 560,000 health practitioners. For more information about AHPRA and the 14 National Boards visit www.ahpra.gov.au

About CHF:

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) is the national peak body representing the interests of two million Australian healthcare consumers. CHF works to achieve safe, quality, timely healthcare for all Australians, supported by accessible health information and systems. For more information about CHF visit www.chf.org.au