

Your details

Name:

Organisation (if applicable):

Are you making a submission as?

- ☐ An organisation
- ☒ An individual medical practitioner
- ☐ Other registered health practitioner, please specify:
- ☐ Consumer/patient
- ☐ Other, please specify:
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you give permission to publish your submission?

- ☐ Yes, with my name
- ☒ Yes, without my name
- ☐ No, do not publish my submission

Feedback on the Consultation regulation impact statement

The Medical Board of Australia is consulting on three options to ensure late career doctors are able to keep providing safe care to their patients.

The details of the options for consideration are contained in the [consultation regulation impact statement](#).

1. Should all registered late career doctors (except those with non-practising registration) be required to have either a health check or fitness to practice assessment?

If not, on what evidence do you base your views?

No. Those who have a GP looking after them would be having a health check regularly. Health checks by the Medical Board should be confined to those doctors who have had complaints made about them or have had concerns expressed about them by other doctors.

2. If a health check or fitness to practise assessment is introduced for late career doctors, should the check commence at 70 years of age or another age?

I do not think age chronological age matters. It is performance and general health that matters.

3. Which of the following options do you agree will provide the best model? Which part of each model do you agree/not agree with and on what evidence do you base your views?

Option 1 Rely on existing guidance, including Good medical practice: a code of conduct for doctors in Australia (Status quo).

Option 2 Require a detailed health assessment of the 'fitness to practise' of doctors aged 70 years and older every three years for doctors from the age of 70 and annually for doctors from the age of 80.

These health assessments are undertaken by a specialist occupational and environmental physician and include an independent clinical assessment of the current and future capacity of the doctor to practise in their particular area of medicine.

Option 3 Require general health checks for late career doctors aged 70 years and older every three years for doctors from the age of 70 and annually for doctors from the age of 80.

The health check would be conducted by the late career doctor's regular GP, or other registered doctor when this is more appropriate, with some elements of the check able to be conducted by other health practitioners with relevant skills, e.g., hearing, vision, height, weight, blood pressure, etc.

Option 1 - I agree fully. This provides the best model.

Option 2 - I totally disagree. This is impracticable and will result in Occupational Physicians spending all their time on assessing doctors and leaving them no time to see patients.

Option 3 - A check by the regular GP would be acceptable as all clinical findings and results of latest investigations would be available to the GP and gaps can be easily filled,

A check by the regular GP would be regarded as a help. A check from an Occupational Physician would be regarded as policing with a view to preventing further practicing.

4. Should all registered late career doctors (except those with non-practising registration) have a cognitive function screening that establishes a baseline for ongoing cognitive assessment?

If not, why not? On what evidence do you base your views?

No. I do not think the ability to do mathematics equates to the ability to practice medicine. I know people (not doctors) who have difficulty with these tests who are doing their jobs with no difficulty. I have no statistical evidence of my views.

5. Should health checks/fitness to practice assessments be confidential between the late career doctor and their assessing/treating doctor/s and not shared with the Board?

Note: A late career doctor would need to declare in their annual registration renewal that they have completed the appropriate health check/fitness to practice assessment and, as they do now, declare whether they have an impairment that may detrimentally affect their ability to practise medicine safely.

Findings should be shared with the Board.

6. Do you think the Board should have a more active role in the health checks/fitness to practice assessments?

If yes, what should that role be?

7. Bo. We are already having Continual Medical Education, CPD and Accreditation by our specialist colleges.

Feedback on draft Registration standard: Health checks for late career doctors

This section asks for feedback on the Board's proposed registration standard: Health checks for late career doctors.

The Board has developed a draft Registration standard: health checks for late career doctors that would support option three. The draft registration standard is on page 68 of the CRIS.

7.1. Is the content and structure of the draft Registration standard: health checks for late career doctors helpful, clear, relevant, and workable?

It is helpful and clear.

7.2. Is there anything missing that needs to be added to the draft registration standard?

Nothing that comes to mind currently.

7.3. Do you have any other comments on the draft registration standard?

No.

Draft supporting documents and resources

This section asks for feedback on the draft documents and resources developed to support Option three - the health check model.

8. The Board has developed draft supporting documents and resources (page 72 of the CRIS). The materials are:

- C-1 Pre-consultation questionnaire that late career doctors would complete before their health check
- C-2 Health check examination guide – to be used by the examining/assessing/treating doctors during the health check
- C-3 Guidance for screening of cognitive function in late career doctors
- C-4 Health check confirmation certificate
- C-5 Flowchart identifying the stages of the health check.

The materials are on page 72 of the CRIS.

8.1. Are the proposed supporting documents and resources (Appendix C-1 to C-5) clear and relevant?

Yes

8.2. What changes would improve them?

Improvement would be not in the tests but in what the pass mark should be. Passing the tests included would qualify a doctor to be active in the front line of the Australian Defence Forces.

8.3. Is the information required in the medical history (C-1) appropriate?

Yes

8.4. Are the proposed examinations and tools listed in the examination guide (C-2) appropriate?

I question whether an over 80 year old doctor should have an annual genital examination.

8.5. Are there other resources needed to support the health checks?

No