

## Additional information

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1 August 2025

### Medical practitioners – Who needs practising registration?

#### Purpose

This additional information should be read with the Information sheet, *Medical practitioners – Who needs practising registration?* It includes:

- the definition of 'practice'
- the use of protected titles, and
- when a person must be registered under the National Law.

#### Definition of 'practice'

The Medical Board of Australia (the Board) defines 'practice' as:

**Practice** means any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner in their profession. Practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

The definition was intended to be broad and inclusive. It allows individuals with qualifications as a health practitioner to be registered if they are using their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner, regardless of whether they are providing direct patient care.

Many qualified health practitioners who use their skills and knowledge in a range of activities outside direct patient care may not need to be registered. This document and the accompanying Information sheet, *Medical practitioners – Who needs practising registration?*, clarify the expectations and approach of the Board. It is based on the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law) and the level of risk to the public that the 'practice' poses.

#### Use of protected titles

Medical practitioners are registered under the National Law. The National Law limits the use of certain titles. The protected titles for medicine are 'medical practitioner' and 'medical specialist', and each of the medical specialties recognised under the National Law has its own protected title. (The list of specialties and protected titles for medical specialists is published on the Board's [Registration standards webpage](#).)

'Doctor' is not a protected title. Other than a few exceptions (that apply to restricted dental acts, prescription of optical appliances and manipulation of the cervical spine) the National Law does not define the activities that require registration as a particular health practitioner. That is, it is not a breach of the National Law for a medical practitioner to use their knowledge and skills relating to the medical profession without being registered, if the individual does not breach the sections of the National Law related to the protection of title or to the specific practice protections.

**Under the National Law, a person must be a registered health practitioner if they:**

1. Use the title 'registered health practitioner' with or without any other words (s116(a)).
2. Take or use a title, name, initial, symbol, word or description that, having regard to the circumstances in which it is taken or used, indicates or could be reasonably understood to indicate, that the person is a health practitioner or is authorised or qualified to practise in a health profession (s116(b)).
3. Claim to be registered under the National Law or hold themselves out as registered under the National Law (s116(c)).
4. Claim to be qualified to practise as a health practitioner (s116(d)).
5. Undertake a restricted act (which are specific dental acts, prescription of optical appliances and manipulation of the cervical spine).