


19 December 2014

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
Melbourne VIC 3001

Reference Public consultation: *Review of Criminal history and English language skills registration standards*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the registration standards in the following Attachments A and B.

Regards,



Dr Greg Rickard RN OAM
Head, National and Key Accounts

Attachment A: Review of Criminal history registration standard

Healthcare Australia (HCA) has reviewed the information provided with the Review of the Criminal history registration standard and has considered the two (2) options outlined:

- Option 1 – Status Quo; or
- Option 2 – a different standard.

HCA supports Option 1 – maintain the current standard.

Issues for HCA:

1. National agreed process for National Criminal History Checks.

HCA provides health practitioners, predominantly nurses, midwives and medical practitioners around Australia for casual or short-term placement or permanent recruitment.

HCA has a contract with Crimtrac for the checking of our employees and also bears the costs of each check, except in Western Australia (WA) where employees and/or candidates individually have to obtain checks through the WA Health Criminal Records Screening Unit or WA Police.

Is it possible to achieve one (1) national and uniform approach to obtaining national criminal history checks?

2. Linking “Working With Children” checks to the National Criminal History Checks

Again, most of our casual staff and candidates for metropolitan, regional, rural and remote across Australia require “Working With Children” checks, yet each State and Territory have their own standard and processes.

A uniform process again would assist greatly with the movement and deployment of health professionals nationally, where they are needed.

3. Refined approach to international criminal history checking.

HCA would support a refined approach to the standard and processes for obtaining international criminal history checks.

Attachment B: Review of English language skills registration standard

Healthcare Australia (HCA) has reviewed the information provided with the Review of English language registration standard and has considered the two (2) options outlined:

- Option 1 – Status Quo; or
- Option 2 – Proposed revised standard.

HCA supports Option 2 – Proposed revised standard.

Issues for HCA:

1. Potential benefits and costs of the proposal

HCA agrees that there would be benefits and reduced costs for the health practitioner and for future employers.

2. Expanding the list of recognised countries

Singapore has since the 1960s, English as the language taught in primary, secondary and at tertiary levels, as well as the “Mother tongue”. All Singapore Registered Nurses are taught in English to Diploma level.

Healthcare Australia (HCA), since 2011 has worked closely with nurses from Singapore and with Curtin University to prepare Singapore nurses to gain employment in Australia. Current activity includes:

- Prospective candidates registered with HCA, approximately 500+;
- Candidates with registration applications with AHPRA, 29 nurses;
- IELTS assessment in progress, 52 nurses;
- Nurses undertaking bridging course provided by Australian university, 44 nurses;
- Nurses receiving APHRA registration in August 2012, 6; and
- Nurses placed in permanent employment in Australia, in August 2012.

HCA supports the inclusion of Singapore in the list of recognised countries.

3. Accepting test results from multiple sittings

HCA would support accepting test results from multiple sittings, in the absence of conclusive research and evidence base to the contrary.

4. Other proposed changes

HCA supports the IELTS results for international pharmacy graduates to be aligned with most other National Boards.