

Professions Reference Group Communiqué

The Professions Reference Group (PRG) met at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) National office in Melbourne on Thursday 30 November 2017.

AHPRA update

AHPRA CEO, Martin Fletcher, updated members on matters, including:

- the 2016/17 Annual Report which has been published. The PRG was briefed on the report in November and profession-specific summaries to be published as they are completed.
- AHPRA and the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which focuses on enhanced cooperation and clarity of working roles in their investigative activities to underpin public safety and protection from registered health practitioners who prescribe performance enhancing drugs without genuine therapeutic need.
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health strategy group, now co-chaired by Associate Professor Gregory Phillips and Dr Jo Flynn AM, is made up of representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and entities involved in the National Scheme. It was established as a proactive measure to identify the National Scheme's strategy and role in ensuring patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia's health system. This includes advocating for amendments to the National Law and cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia's health system.
- the Medical Board of Australia has designed a Professional Performance Framework with an emphasis on five pillars covering areas of continuing professional development (CPD) standards, active assurance of safe practice (where clinical practitioners over 70 years of age and those with other risk factors will be reviewed), ensuring public confidence in the competence of practitioners. Other professions noted their interest in the Framework, particularly in the CPD requirements. A more detailed discussion on this matter was requested for the next PRG meeting.
- there have been changes to the Queensland Ombudsman Office and an Acting Ombudsman is now in place.
- the new Jurisdiction Administrative Committee (JAC) has taken the place that HWPC had prior to commencement of the scheme. JAC will streamline and focus processes and will be chaired by the AHPRA CEO.

Regulatory operations

Members were updated on the performance of the directorate in the first quarter of 2017/18 and ongoing work with notifiers and health practitioners to improve their experience of the notifications process. Significant changes implemented in the operating model has provided improved performance of the notifications, registration and legal areas.

Online healthcare directory and booking sites

Members were updated on the progress of discussions between AHPRA and an online service that provides a health directory and booking site regarding potential breaches of the National Law. Member feedback was also sought on a tool developed to provide advertisers with more guidance around advertising: *Is it a testimonial?* Further, a consultation with the Community Reference Group was organised and their formal feedback is forthcoming.

Advertising compliance and enforcement strategy

Members were updated on advertising compliance and enforcement noting the profession-specific advertising resources currently available and the addition of the Self-assessment tool. A review of the Guidelines for Advertising of Regulated Health Services is now underway including an overview of its

objectives, timelines and issues. Further, a decision-making framework has been developed to aid health practitioners in determining whether an advertising material is a testimonial.

Draft National Board Guidelines for the provision of practise information

Members were updated on the commencement of Tranche 1 amendments to the National Law and the regulation of the paramedicine profession. An initial discussion was conducted on the preliminary consultation for the draft National Board guidelines – *Informing a National Board where you practice*.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the PRG will be in the first quarter of 2018.

Jodette Kotz

Chair

Professions Reference Group