

25th July 2011

Dr. Robert Fendall
Chair
Osteopathy Board of Australia

Dear Dr. Fendall,

Re: Registration Standard: Limited registration in the public interest

The Chiropractic & Osteopathic College of Australasia (COCA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this proposed registration standard.

The College recognises the imperative of ensuring protection of the public, in its various forms, by the issuance of registration standards and guidelines. The College also recognises that this imperative extends to all persons who hold themselves out to be and or use the title of “osteopath” and in particular, where the services provided by a practitioner are of or related to clinical practice.

In general the College wishes to congratulate the Osteopathy Board of Australia (OBA) on the formulation of this registration standard; however we believe that certain aspects of the standard require clarification and possible amendment.

The College notes the intention of all 10 National Boards to undertake a consultation process on the definition of “Practice”. COCA welcomes such a consultation process and hopes that through such consultation a more appropriate definition of this term can be determined.

Scope of application

The College believes that the Board should better define when it is and under what circumstances it is in the public interest to register an osteopath under this category. The current draft Registration Standard provides one example of an instance, where it would be in the public interest to register an osteopath for a limited period and/or for a limited scope of practice, i.e. an overseas expert who proposes to demonstrate or teach or participate in a workshop/seminar involving manipulation of the cervical spine.

The College suggests that the requirement for limited registration in the public interest should be clearly defined to include any activity, clinical or otherwise, which when applied has the potential to cause harm or increased risk of harm to the public at large, including osteopaths or student osteopaths participating in a workshop or seminar. In this context the activity could include such things as advice on treatment or diagnosis, without the actual demonstration or teaching of a particular technique or procedure beyond situations in which the demonstration or teaching of a particular procedure or involvement in a workshop or seminar involving clinical application occurs.

Recommendation:

That the circumstances under which the Board will consider registration of an osteopath in the public interest be clearly defined and include any activity, clinical or otherwise, which when applied has the potential to cause harm or increased risk of harm to the public at large, including osteopaths or student osteopaths participating in a workshop or seminar.

Requirements for initial registration

Whilst the College understands that the requirements for initial registration, appear uniform across all Boards and comply with the relevant sections of the National Law, in our view certain requirements, in certain cases, are unnecessary or overly restrictive.

The College agrees, in principle, with the requirement of confirmation, that an applicant seeking limited registration in the public interest, will meet the requirements of the Board's Professional Indemnity Registration Standard. However, in our view this particular requirement should only apply to individuals who seek registration under this standard, for the purposes of demonstrating or teaching a procedure which when applied has the potential to cause harm or increased risk of harm to the public at large.

In other circumstances, where the applicant seeks limited registration as osteopath, in the public interest but does not engage in activities that have a potential to cause harm or increased risk of harm to the public at large, then this requirement would appear unnecessary. Similarly, under such circumstances the requirement for an applicant to comply with the Board's Recency of Practice Registration Standard would also appear unnecessary.

Recommendation:

That the requirement for osteopaths seeking limited registration under this standard to meet the Board's Professional Indemnity Registration Standard be restricted to only those osteopaths whose proposed activities include the demonstration or teaching of a procedure, which when applied has the potential to cause harm or increased risk of harm to the public at large.

Recommendation:

That the requirement for osteopaths seeking limited registration under this standard to meet the Board's Recency of Practice Registration Standard be restricted to only those osteopaths whose proposed activities include the demonstration or teaching of a procedure, which when applied has the potential to cause harm or increased risk of harm to the public at large.

We hope, as part in this consultation process, you find our comments helpful in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John W Reggars', written in a cursive style.

John W Reggars DC, MChiroSc.
CEO/Vice President