



Communiqué

April 2012 Meeting of the Osteopathy Board of Australia

The 32nd meeting of the Osteopathy Board of Australia was held by teleconference on 19 April 2012. The Board is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (National Law) as in force in each state and territory.

Guidelines on Clinical Records

The Board is pleased to announce the release of *Guidelines on Clinical Records* which is published on the Board's website at <http://www.osteopathyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines.aspx>.

All osteopaths are encouraged to read and apply the *Guidelines on Clinical Records*. The Guidelines provide a contemporary guide on how to record information and manage clinical records in both electronic and paper formats. The experience of the Board, and former state and territory Boards, is that clinical records are frequently scrutinised during investigations or other proceedings. The Board has drawn on this experience to inform the profession about the expectations and minimum requirements for clinical records.

Useful feedback was received by the Board during the public consultation phase, and we would like to thank those stakeholders who took the time to put suggestions forward.

Social media policy

The Board provided input into a draft policy on social media which will be released shortly for public consultation. The policy confirms that health practitioners must abide by the Board's codes and guidelines when they use social media including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and blogs.

The draft policy includes advice that when using social media, registered osteopaths should comply with the National Law, *A Code of Conduct for Registered Health Practitioners* and the Board's advertising guidelines. In particular, practitioners are advised:

- To meet their professional obligations
- To ensure that they do not breach their patient's confidentiality or privacy
- To present information in an unbiased, evidence informed manner and not make unsubstantiated claims and
- Not to use testimonials or purported testimonials.

The Board will invite feedback on the draft policy when it is released for consultation on behalf of all Boards.

All Boards consult on international criminal history checks

The National Law requires that before making a decision about an application for registration, National Boards must check the applicant's criminal history, including consideration of criminal history from jurisdictions outside Australia. National Boards and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) have been considering possible options to refine the mechanisms for international criminal history checks.

A consultation paper will be released shortly which explores the issues associated with a range of options and will seek feedback on the best approach.

The consultation paper acknowledges that the options and issues are complex. The scope and content of criminal history documentation is likely to vary across countries. In addition, different approaches to the criminal law and varying political environments may mean that it may be difficult to determine the accuracy of an international criminal history, or the weight to be assigned to a particular offence.

Four options have been included in the paper. These are:

1. Applicant declaration only – no additional evidence of criminal history is required, sought or obtained from jurisdictions outside Australia. This is the current approach
2. Applicant provides criminal history clearance evidence with application
3. AHPRA obtains clearance/information from jurisdictions outside Australia when processing applications
4. Applicant makes a declaration and AHPRA undertakes random sample audit.

The Board welcomes feedback from all stakeholders during the consultation. The consultation paper will be released shortly on the Board's website.

Information for osteopaths

Information for osteopaths is being regularly added to the Board's website. As well as the upcoming consultation papers referred to above, there is a range of important documents, guidelines and policies published on this site and the Board encourages osteopathy practitioners and students to make themselves familiar with the information published at www.osteopathyboard.gov.au



Dr Robert Fendall
Chair
Osteopathy Board of Australia
3 May 2012