

Communiqué

December 2019 meeting of the Osteopathy Board of Australia

The 119th meeting of the Osteopathy Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 16 December 2019 at the Ahpra National Office in Melbourne. The Registration and Notification Committee (RNC) also met on the same day as the Board meeting.

The Board publishes this communiqué on our website and emails it to a broad range of stakeholders. At each meeting the Board considers a wide range of issues, many of which are routine and are not included in this communiqué.

Health practitioners encouraged to seek advice about their own health

Mandatory notifications are an important part of patient safety. We need to know when patients may be at substantial risk of harm from a registered health practitioner. We also want to make sure that practitioners with health issues feel safe to seek treatment without fear of an unnecessary mandatory notification being made about them. A practitioner with a health issues, on its own, does not require a mandatory notification.

There are four concerns that may trigger a mandatory notification, depending on the risk of harm to the public:

- impairment
- intoxication while practising
- significant departure from accepted professional standards, and
- sexual misconduct.

[New resources](#) have been published to explain mandatory notifications and when they do and do not need to be made, in preparation for new requirements that take effect in early 2020. Produced by Ahpra and the National Boards regulating Australia's health practitioners, the resources aim to support practitioners to understand changes to the law about mandatory notification requirements which were made by Health Ministers.

Changes to mandatory notifications

Early this year, Health Ministers agreed to make changes to mandatory notifications requirements in the National Law and the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 (Qld)* (the Bill) was passed by the Queensland Parliament in February 2019.

The changes only apply to treating practitioners and intend to support practitioners to seek advice for a health issue (including mental health issues), while continuing to protect the public. This is because the circumstances for treating practitioners to make mandatory notifications are more limited than they are for other groups.

Under these National Law amendments, three of the four types of conduct (impairment, intoxication and practice outside of professional standards), which may lead to a mandatory notification, will have the same threshold for mandatory notifications by treating practitioners. It is: *substantial risk of harm*. A substantial risk of harm is a very high threshold for reporting risk of harm to the public.

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When the amendments take effect in early 2020, they will apply in all states and territories except Western Australia, where mandatory notification requirements will not change.

Ahpra and the National Boards have produced resources to support practitioners to understand changes to the law about mandatory notification requirements which were made by Health Ministers.

Find out more, download resources and access the current guidelines for mandatory notifications by going to www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications/mandatorynotifications.

Social media guide for health practitioners

A new guide to help registered health practitioners understand and meet their obligations when using social media has been published on the [Board's website](#) and in the Advertising resources section of [Ahpra's website](#)

The guide reminds practitioners that when interacting online, they should maintain professional standards and be aware of the implications of their actions, just as when they interact in person.

The guide does not stop practitioners from engaging online or via social media; instead, it encourages practitioners to act ethically and professionally in any setting.

To help practitioners meet their obligations, the guide also outlines some common pitfalls practitioners may encounter when using social media.

Updated logos for Ahpra and National Boards

Ahpra and the National Boards have updated their logos. Information about the new Osteopathy Board and Ahpra logos can be found on the [Board's website](#).

Are your contact details up-to-date?

It is important that your contact details are up-to-date to receive renewal reminders from Ahpra and information from the Board. You can check your details via the [Login icon](#) at the top right of the Ahpra website. Email accounts need to be set to receive communications from Ahpra and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

Follow Ahpra on social media

Connect with Ahpra on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to receive up to date information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



Keeping in touch with the Board

The Board publishes a range of information and resources about registration and the Board's expectations of practitioners on their website at www.osteopathyboard.gov.au. Osteopaths are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policies and guidelines affecting their profession.

For more information about registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme please refer to the information published on www.ahpra.gov.au. Alternatively, contact Ahpra by an online enquiry form or phone 1300 419 495.

Season's Greetings

On behalf of the Board I would like to wish all members of the Osteopathy profession and our stakeholders a safe and happy festive season.

Dr Nikole Grbin (Osteopath)

Chair
Osteopathy Board of Australia
23 December 2019