



Communiqué

Thirtieth meeting of the Dental Board of Australia – 25 May 2012

The Dental Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* (National Law) as in force in each state and territory. This communiqué highlights key issues from the Board's meeting held in May 2012.

Registration in the division of Oral Health Therapy (OHT)

The Board agreed to extend the transitional pathway until **30 June 2013** for dental practitioners to register in the division of OHT with the following qualifications:

1. a dental practitioner currently registered as both a dental hygienist and dental therapist, with a three year bachelor degree qualification in one stream (i.e. either dental hygiene or dental therapy) plus a non-bachelor degree in the other stream (i.e. the alternate either dental hygiene or dental therapy) and has recency of practice (in accordance with the Board's Registration Standard) as both a dental hygienist and a dental therapist, or
2. a dental practitioner currently registered as both a dental hygienist and a dental therapist who has successfully completed the Academic Upgrade Course for School Dental Therapists – University of Queensland and has recency of practice as both a dental hygienist and a dental therapist (in accordance with the Board's Registration Standard).

Board Newsletter

The Board is finalising the content for its next Newsletter to be released in June 2012. The Board has agreed to publish two Newsletters per year. The November 2011 Newsletter was well received, with a high proportion of dental practitioners opening the November newsletter which was emailed to them. The Board encourages all dental practitioners to provide AHPRA with a current email contact address by updating their contact details through online services. This will enable AHPRA to contact dental practitioners about important registration information and the National Board to contact dental practitioners with important updates for the profession.

Review of the Scope of Practice Registration Standard

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC) has written to the Board and advised that, at its most recent meeting, Health Ministers noted the Health Workforce Australia Scope of practice review - Oral Health Practitioners (the report). The AHWMC has provided the Board with a copy of the report and has asked the Board to provide advice to Health Ministers on the scope of practice and new models of care and training, as part of the Board's review of the Registration Standard - Scope of Practice.

The Board may now begin its review of the Registration Standard - Scope of Practice and will consult with the profession and the community as a part of this process. In due course, at the end of the review and consultation process, the Board may make recommendations regarding the registration standard, to AHWMC.

In the meantime, the Board reminds all dental practitioners that the existing Registration Standard - Scope of Practice was developed to accommodate the variations in the regulation of 'scope of practice' in each state and territory before the National Scheme.

As advised in the Board Communiqué in April 2010 and again in February 2012, the Registration Standard - Scope of Practice requires that a "...*dental practitioner can only perform dental procedures for which they have been formally educated and trained in programs of study approved by the National Board and in which they are competent*".

Therefore a dental practitioner is practising within their scope of practice if they:

1. have been formally educated/trained in a dental procedure through an approved (or previously approved) add-on program or through their original approved program which led to registration, and
2. are competent to perform the dental procedure and meet the Board's recency of practice requirements.

Practitioners are encouraged to refer to the Board's website at www.dentalboard.gov.au for news and updates on policy and guidelines affecting their profession.

Current/upcoming consultations:

- **Registration Standards and Guidelines for consultation**

Linked to the recently approved and published *Registration Standard for Limited Registration for Postgraduate Training or Supervised Practice*, the Board has released draft *Guidelines on Limited Registration* for consultation on the Board's website www.dentalboard.gov.au/News/Current-Consultations.aspx. The Board is inviting submissions **by close of business on Friday 15 June 2012.**

- **Revised Supervision guidelines**

The Board has now released a revised draft *Supervision guidelines* for consultation on the Board's website at www.dentalboard.gov.au/News/Current-Consultations.aspx. The revised draft *Supervision guidelines* are a further development of the current *Board Supervision Guidelines*. The Board is requesting that respondents focus submissions on the key differences from the current Guidelines and the new revised draft Guidelines. The Board is inviting submissions **by close of business on Friday 29 June 2012.**

- **Discussion paper on Anxiolysis**

The Board has released its *Guidelines – Conscious Sedation Area of Practice Endorsement* (the Guidelines) to provide further detail for dental practitioners in relation to the *Registration Standard for Endorsement* in relation to conscious sedation (the Standard). The Standard and the Guidelines provide clear guidance to dentists who practice conscious sedation and when dentists need to be endorsed by the Board. Dental practitioners utilise other forms of sedation and the Dental Board has agreed to release a Discussion paper on **Anxiolysis** written by Clinical Associate Professor Douglas Stewart. The Board invites interested parties to comment on the paper, with consideration and relevance to the Board's key function of public protection.

- **Social Media Policy**

The National Boards will shortly release a draft policy on social media for consultation. The policy, which has been agreed by all National Boards, confirms that health practitioners must abide by the relevant laws, the Board's Code of Conduct and the Guidelines for the Advertising of Regulated Health Services guidelines when they use social media. In particular, registered health practitioners, when using social media, should remember that the National Law, Advertising Guidelines and Code of Conduct apply and should only post information that is not in breach of these obligations by:

- not breaching professional obligations
- not breaching confidentiality and privacy obligations (such as discussing patients or posting pictures of procedures, case studies, patients or sensitive material)
- presenting information in an unbiased, evidence informed context and not making unsubstantiated claims, and
- not using testimonials or purported testimonials in any capacity on any medium.

Review of Registration Standards

The National Boards have committed to reviewing their registration standards at least every three years. By mid 2013, the National Scheme will be three years old, which will trigger a review of the standards that have been in place since the start of the scheme. In preparation, National Boards and AHPRA have commissioned research on English language skills testing, including the scope of exemptions from testing requirements. This research will inform the review of English Language Skills Registration Standards in 2013. The research evidence and other information from the review will be shared with the four professions joining the Scheme on 1 July 2012 so that they can consider any implications for their registration standards. The existing standard was based on the approach of state and territory registration boards before July 2010, and informed by the consultation process that supported its development. The National Boards will consult on any changes to the English language skills registration standard in 2013.

John Lockwood
Chair, Dental Board of Australia
5 June 2012