



Communiqué

October 2016 meeting of the Dental Board of Australia

The 79th meeting of the Dental Board of Australia (the Board) was held on Friday 28 October 2016 at the National Office of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) in Melbourne.

This communiqué highlights key discussions and considerations from the Board's meeting as well as other important information.

We publish this communiqué on our website and email it to a broad range of stakeholders. We encourage you to distribute it to colleagues and interested parties, including within the organisation you work in.

New video - Infection control tips for dental patients

The Board has launched its first ever video for patients to help make sure they are getting safe care from their dental practitioners.

Launched during International Infection Control Week (16 – 22 October) the video aims to:

- help patients know what infection prevention and control protocols to expect when visiting their dental practitioner
- encourage patients to ask their treating dental practitioner questions about infection prevention and control and how their treating dental practitioner can ensure that they meet their infection control obligations, and
- inform patients on what to do if they have a concern about their dental practitioner's infection control practices.

The Board considers investing in information for patients a powerful additional check on the infection control standards of dental practitioners in Australia.

You can view the video on the [Board's website](#). The video gives dental patients seven easy to remember tips to consider whether their dental practitioner is following the correct infection control protocols.

It is important to note that the video was filmed in a simulated environment with actors and should not be used as a training material for professionals. The video is a resource intended for general public information.

The Board expects all dental practitioners to practise in a way that maintains and enhances public health and safety by ensuring that the risk of the spread of infection is prevented or minimised.

Dental practitioners are reminded to practise in accordance with the Board's Guidelines on infection control and to refer to resources developed by the Board to ensure that they meet the infection control obligations.

The Board's Guidelines and additional resources are available on the [Board's website](#).

Obligations of dental practitioners

Under the National Accreditation and Registration Scheme (the National Scheme), the Board has developed a broad regulatory framework that describes the obligations of dental practitioners in their practice. The Board reminds dental practitioners to practice in accordance with the Board's regulatory standards, codes and guidelines by:

- performing only those dental procedures for which they have been educated and trained and are competent
- practising within the definition of dentistry contained in the Board's [Guidelines for scope of practice](#)
- ensuring they have appropriate [professional indemnity insurance](#) (PII) arrangements in place for all aspects of their practice
- acting in accordance with the standards set out in the [Code of conduct](#) including expectations about informed and financial consent, and
- obey the relevant state and territory drugs and poisons legislation and regulations by using scheduled medicines only for the purpose that the authority has granted.

If a dental practitioner's practice was brought into question through a complaint or concern raised with the Board, the practitioner would be expected to demonstrate how they had complied with these obligations.

Practitioners are reminded to familiarise themselves with the Board's regulatory policies, specifically the *Dental scope of practice registration standard* and associated guidelines and *Code of conduct*. These documents are published on the [Board's website](#).

What should you think about before providing dental treatment?

When assessing your own individual scope of practice, you should ask yourself the following questions:

1. Am I practising within the requirements of the National Board's registration standard?
2. Have I completed the necessary education and training?
3. Are there other legislative and/or regulatory frameworks that I need to consider? For example, other regulatory requirements that determine a dental practitioners' capacity to possess, prescribe, supply and/or administer medications, and perform radiographic procedures.
4. Do my PII arrangements provide cover for the clinical procedure(s) being carried out?
5. Does my workplace allow the practice? Does my employer have any additional specific requirements? For example, supervision requirements, requirements for treatment planning and referral.
6. Have I carried out the practice/procedure recently?
7. Do I feel confident to carry out the practice/procedure?

If you answered *no*, or if are unclear on, any of these questions, you should refer the patient to another dental practitioner who is educated, trained and competent to carry out the practice and/or procedure.

Consultation on proposed entry level competencies for endorsement for conscious sedation

The Board has begun a public consultation on proposed entry level competencies for endorsement for conscious sedation.

The Board has developed these proposed entry level competencies to clearly establish the minimum competency standards expected of applicants for endorsement of registration for conscious sedation.

The public consultation paper is published in the [current consultation section](#) of the Board's website and submissions will be accepted until Friday 13 January 2017.

Health professions agreement

The Board and AHPRA have published the health profession agreement (HPA) for 2016-20. The HPA sets out the partnership between the Board and AHPRA, and the services AHPRA will provide in supporting the Board to carry out its functions.

The 2016-20 Dental Board of Australia and AHPRA Health Profession Agreement is available on the [Health Profession Agreements](#) page.

Newsletter from the Board

The Board has published the latest edition of its newsletter. Newsletters are sent directly to registered dental practitioners for whom we have a current email address. You can access the newsletter in the [Newsletter section](#) of the Board's website.

Registration data

The Board has released its quarterly registration data. Read the latest report and other statistics on the [statistics page](#) of the Board's website.

Reminder: renewal of registration for 2016/17

The Board reminds dental practitioners to renew their registration by 30 November 2016, the registration expiry date for general, non-practising and specialist registration. Under the National Law¹, dental practitioners are responsible for renewing their registration on time each year. Renewal applications received within a month after the expiry date will incur a late fee.

Dental practitioners who do not renew registration within one month of their registration expiry date must have their name removed from the [national register of practitioners](#). Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise or work as a dental practitioner in Australia until a new application for registration is approved.

A series of reminders to renew are being sent to practitioners by AHPRA, on behalf of the Board. The email reminders include links to [online renewal](#) and to a [video](#) which explains the process.

The Board encourages dental practitioners to renew online and reminds them to make sure AHPRA has their current contact information to receive future email and hard copy reminders to renew.

Graduate applications for registration: Final-year students can apply online now

Dental students who will soon complete an approved program of study can go online now to apply for registration before they graduate.

Graduates need to be registered as a dental practitioner with the Board before they start practising and must meet the Board's registration requirements.

The [online graduate application](#) service on the AHPRA website helps to smooth the path from study to work by enabling students to apply for registration four to six weeks before completing their course. All applicants must send some [supporting documents](#) to AHPRA by mail to complete their application.

Australian Health Ministers' communiqués published

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council has published two communiqués after its most recent meeting, one highlighting the main topics of discussion at the recent COAG Health Council meeting and a second announcing the start of the reviewer for the Independent Review of Accreditation Systems within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Go to the [COAG Health Council website](#) to access this information.

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.

John Lockwood AM
Chair, Dental Board of Australia
18 November 2016

¹ Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).