

Media Statement

AHPRA takes action to protect patients

10 June 2015

AHPRA has charged a man who is not registered or qualified in Australia with pretending to be a dentist and allegedly providing dental treatment to people in Victoria.

AHPRA is appealing to any Victorians who may have more information about these allegations to come forward.

After a tip off, AHPRA launched an investigation and, assisted by Victoria Police, executed a search warrant on a residential property in Rocklands Rise, Meadow Heights and seized equipment.

'Our job is to manage risk to patients and protect patient safety,' said AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher.

'We have taken all the steps open to us to stop the alleged dental practice by this unregistered person, and manage the ongoing risk to the public,' Mr Fletcher said.

Because of concerns about inadequate infection control, poor hygiene and potential public health risks, AHPRA provided an urgent briefing for the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

AHPRA is working closely with DHHS to manage this matter in the public interest.

AHPRA's focus is on regulatory action. The Dental Board of Australia cannot take disciplinary action because the man is not and has not ever been registered in Australia in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme).

On behalf of the Board, AHPRA has charged him under Part 7 of the National Law. This involves prosecuting him through the Magistrates Court for pretending to be a dentist (holding out), using a protected title (dentist), carrying out 'restricted dental acts, that by law, can only be provided by registered dental practitioners, and for possession of schedule 4 drugs.

A date for the hearing in the magistrates' court will now be set.

The Department is managing the possible impact from poor hygiene and inadequate infection control on his past-patients.

DHHS is appealing to anyone who received dental care at any location in Rocklands Rise, Meadow Heights to call the Department on 1800 356 061 between 8am and 7pm. The Department will assess the potential risk of transmission of infection and provide advice to patients and their general practitioners.

To make it easier for former patients, a single help-line will manage the public health issues and receive initial complaints. Expert staff and translators are on hand to answer calls. Anyone who wants to make a complaint to AHPRA about this person can leave their contact details with staff at the DHHS hotline on 1800 356 061, who will pass on the information to AHPRA, or they can contact AHPRA directly on 1300 419 495 between 9am and 5pm.

To protect the integrity of its ongoing work, the Board and AHPRA are not able to comment further at this time.

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