



Communiqué

March 2019 meeting of the Dental Board of Australia

The 105th meeting of the Dental Board of Australia (the Board) was held on Friday 29 March at the AHPRA office in Sydney.

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 your workplace.

Joint meeting with NSW Council

A joint meeting with the Dental Council of New South Wales (the NSW Council) was held on 28 March 2019 in Sydney. The Board and the NSW Council discussed common issues and shared current and upcoming work. Both dental regulators agreed that joint meetings are key to their strong relationship and an annual joint meeting would remain an important engagement activity.

COAG Health Council communiqué

The COAG Health Council met on Friday 8 March 2019 in Adelaide. Items of relevance included a plan to develop a medical workforce strategy, a briefing on the Dental Board's proposed revised scope of practice standard, cultural safety for health professionals, and; options for a nationally consistent approach to the regulation of spinal manipulation of children. A copy of the Communiqué can be accessed [here](#).

Scope of practice update

As mentioned above, the Chair of the Board and the CEO of AHPRA briefed Health Ministers on the Board's proposed revised *Scope of practice registration standard* at the Ministers' meeting on 8 March 2019 in Adelaide.

At that meeting Health Ministers agreed to refer the proposed revised standard to [the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care](#) (the Commission) to independently assess the patient quality, patient safety implications and the consumer benefit of the revised standard, and to report back to Health Ministers at their next meeting in July 2019.

The Board is continuing its engagement work to support the implementation of the proposed revised registration standard and will keep dental practitioners informed as this work progresses, including on the work of the Commission.

Over the past eight years, the Board has been working to transition the dental profession, particularly dentists, away from the prescriptive requirements for the scope of practice. The Board Chair reaffirms that the Board's commitment to working with dental practitioners, especially dentists, and other stakeholders to implement the changes once a decision has been made by Health Ministers.

Caring for you – the Board is pursuing a practitioner support service for all dental practitioners

The Board is progressing the development of a dental practitioner support service for every registered dental practitioner and dental student in Australia. The support service is something the Board has been considering for some time and was identified as a key initiative for the FY 2019/2020 at its November 2018 planning day.

The support service will be a confidential information and referral service, available nationally for those dental practitioners and students who may be experiencing health-related issues or life stresses.

The practitioner support service is an opportunity for the Board to support the profession and protect the public by enabling timely lifesaving information and referral to support services. This will help dental practitioners and students seek early and confidential assistance in the management of their health and wellbeing.

This work provides an opportunity for the Board to work collaboratively with professional associations who can assist in the development of the service. It is also an opportunity for professional associations to work with each other to promote the importance of all dental practitioners looking after their health and wellbeing and seeking help when they need it.

The Board's next steps will be to complete the scoping work of the options for the support service, and host and coordinate a roundtable with professional associations and the Australian Dental Council (ADC) in September 2019.

Alert for dental practitioners – issues with hand held nitrous oxide

The Board has been alerted to patient and community safety concerns regarding the availability of a hand held nitrous oxide device. The device has recently been advertised to dentists. The concerns raised to the Board about the device is that it lacks some important safety features and has an increased risk of leading to hypoxia of a patient during its use. There were also concerns expressed that the stated patient selection criteria for use of the device may not be appropriate.

The Board has had further discussions about the risk associated with the device to the safety of the public with the Australian Dental Association (ADA). The Board has also sought further advice and guidance from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) about this device. The Board has been advised that the retailer has voluntarily suspended sale of the device pending further advice from the relevant regulator.

The Board reminds dental practitioners to act professionally and exercise clinical judgment when introducing new devices and procedures into their practice.

The Board joins the conversation on Oral Health day

The Board published a [media release](#) and supporting social posts to participate in [World Oral Health Day 2019](#). The Board also promoted the day and its health messages to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) staff.

The Board recognises the important role dental practitioners have by protecting the public through the delivery of safe and quality care. Dental practitioners, as part of the health care team, have a significant role in helping patients keep safe and be protected when receiving the care they need.

The Board thanked dental practitioners who are doing the right thing by meeting their regulatory obligations when providing care.

Titles in health advertising – how to get it right

AHPRA and National Boards have published a new resource to help practitioners understand their legal obligations when using titles in health advertising.

The titles tool is the latest in a series of [resources and support materials](#) developed to help health practitioners, healthcare providers and other advertisers of regulated health services check and correct their advertising so it complies with the National Law.

The [titles tool](#) is available in the *Advertising resources* section of the AHPRA website.

Have your say: How should we define 'cultural safety'?

AHPRA, the National Boards and Accreditation Authorities in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) which regulates registered health practitioners in Australia have partnered with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders and the National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF) to release a public consultation.

Together, they are seeking feedback on a proposed definition of 'cultural safety' to develop an agreed, national baseline definition that can be used as a foundation for embedding cultural safety across all functions in the National Scheme and for use by the National Health Leadership Forum.

In total, there are 44 organisations represented in this consultation, which is being coordinated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group (the Strategy Group), which is convened by AHPRA, and the NHLF.

The consultation is a continuation of the work by the National Scheme's Strategy Group that has achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as its overall goal. Members of the Group include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders and members from AHPRA, National Boards, Accreditation Authorities and NSW Councils.

The six-week consultation is open to the public. Everyone interested in helping to shape the definition of 'cultural safety' that will be used in the National Scheme and by NHLF members is warmly invited to share their views.

The consultation is open until 5:00 pm, Wednesday 15 May 2019.

Help define this important term for the National Scheme. For more information read the [media release](#) on the AHPRA 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.

Conclusion

The National Board publishes a range of information about registration and the National Board's expectations of practitioners on its website at www.dentalboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more information or help with questions about your registration please send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Dr Murray Thomas
Chair, Dental Board of Australia
5 April 2019