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Chair's message

Welcome to the eighth edition of the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia's (the Board) newsletter. Previous issues can be found on the Board's [website](#).

The end of the 'grandparenting' period (July 2012 to June 2015), when older qualifications and/or experience could be considered for qualifying to register as Chinese medicine practitioner, is very close. The grandparenting provisions of the National Law¹ expire on the 30 June 2015. There will be other pathways to registration such as completing an approved program of study; demonstrating substantial equivalence; or doing an exam or assessment as required by the Board. You can read more in this issue.

We've also provided information about the practitioner audit process, and news from AHPRA and the other National Boards in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

Best regards,

Professor Charlie Xue

Chair, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia

¹ The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

End of arrangements allowing some Chinese medicine practitioners to become registered

On 30 June 2015, the 'grandparenting' arrangements that allowed some Chinese medicine practitioners to become registered as the profession joined the National Scheme will expire.

Chinese medicine practitioners who have not yet applied for registration and do not meet the qualifications requirements of section 53 of the National Law will be affected.

From **1 July 2015**, the pathways to become registered will be: 1) completing an approved program of study; 2) demonstrating substantial equivalence; or 3) doing an exam or assessment as required by the National Board.

For more information, see the *Grandparenting standard* on our [Registration standards](#) page.

Call for applications for appointment to the Board

Applications are now sought for appointment to a vacancy on the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia for a practitioner member from a small jurisdiction.



To be eligible for appointment as a practitioner member, you must hold current registration in the profession and be from the Australian Capital Territory, or the Northern Territory, or Tasmania.

National Board appointments are made by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC), under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory. Appointments are for up to three years as decided by the AHWMC.

The candidate information pack and application forms are available from our [website](#).

For general enquiries, email boardappoint@ahpra.gov.au or phone (03) 8708 9147.

Applications close **5.00pm AEST on Wednesday 27 May 2015**.

Chinese Medicine Accreditation Committee

The Board has extended the term of appointment of the members of the Chinese Medicine Accreditation Committee to 30 June 2016 to coincide with its scheduled review of its accreditation arrangements.

The Board has accepted the resignation of Dr Shelley Beer from the Accreditation Committee earlier this year. Dr Beer was appointed to the inaugural Chinese Medicine Accreditation Committee and contributed greatly to the development of the accreditation standards and process under the National Scheme. We thank Dr Beer for her contribution and commitment and wish her well in her future endeavours.

To fill the vacancy the Board decided to offer a short-term appointment ending 30 June 2016 (to coincide with the existing members' terms of appointment). We sought expressions of interest from accreditation assessors registered in the Chinese herbal medicine and/or Chinese herbal dispenser divisions of the register and were pleased with the interest shown in the work of the committee.

The Board is in the process of finalising this appointment and expects to make an announcement in its next communiqué. We thank those assessors who put forward an expression of interest.

Visit from Chinese Medicine Council of New South Wales

The President of the Chinese Medicine Council of New South Wales, Associate Professor Christopher Zaslowski, attended and addressed the April Board meeting in the interest of effective communication and collaborative effort between the Board and the Council. The Council manages complaints (notifications) about the conduct, performance or health of registered Chinese medicine practitioners and students in NSW.

The Board and Council are keen to promote consistency and a mutual understanding of their work and roles within the National Scheme.

Board consultations and publications

Draft guidelines for safe Chinese herbal medicine practice

The Board's Policy, Planning and Communication Committee and its Technical Advisory Group have continued to meet to consider the feedback from the public consultation on draft *Guidelines for safe Chinese herbal medicine practice*.

As part of this process the Board has agreed to fund the development of a **herbal nomenclature compendium**. This will be the authorised resource to assist with accurate recording of herbal medicines using consistent nomenclature in patient records, and on prescriptions and herbal medicine labels.

The guidelines are a priority policy area for the Board, but finalisation of the guidelines and development of the compendium will take some time. We will keep you up to date through our newsletters and regular communiqué.

When this process is completed, we will publish our final decisions with explanatory notes.

Review of complementary medicines regulation

The Board recently made a submission to the Review of Medicines and Medical Devices Regulation conducted by an expert panel through the Department of Health. The Board's submission focused on patient safety and its importance in relation to the regulation of Chinese herbal medicines.

We have included a link to the review website on the [News page](#) of our website (although this stage of the review is now closed).

Updates to the Privacy Act – health businesses and health information

In our February newsletter, we inadvertently published out-of-date information on privacy requirements.

The *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act) regulates how organisations collect and handle personal information, including health information. It also generally permits a person to access information held about them. Amendments to the Privacy Act commenced on 12 March 2014.

These amendments replace the former National Privacy Principles with 13 new Australian Privacy Principles (APPs). A specific requirement of Australian Privacy Principle 1.3 is to have an up to date and easily accessible privacy policy.

The APPs are not prescriptive. Each APP entity needs to apply the principles to its own situation. We advise all practitioners to visit the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's (OAIC) website and become familiar with their obligations under the Privacy Act.

The OAIC has published a [fact sheet](#) that outlines responsibilities under the Act. There is also a guide to developing a compliant [privacy policy](#).

The Australian Information Commissioner has investigative and enforcement powers to aid compliance with the Act.

For further details of the requirements and the differences from the old ones see the OAIC's privacy principles [comparison guide](#).

Recognition of acupuncture as an 'approved treatment' – Western Australia

From Wednesday 1 April 2015, acupuncture is recognised as an 'approved treatment' under section 5(1) of the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981*.

The fixed fee of \$71.60 has also been prescribed under the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management (Scales of Fees) Regulations 1998* for acupuncture provided to injured workers.

The **prescribed fee** is payable to Chinese medicine practitioners registered in the Division of acupuncture.

If you have any queries about acupuncture as an approved treatment, please contact Kevin Gillingham, Manager Policy and Legislative Services, WorkCover WA, on (08) 9388 5640.

Continuing professional development – are you keeping records?

The Board's CPD registration standard requires that all practitioners ensure that their CPD activities are recorded. The records should include:

- details of the suitable CPD activity (date, a brief description and the number of hours spent in each activity, provider or participants/resources), and
- evidence of attendance.

The Board has issued supporting guidelines on its website under [Codes and guidelines](#) which explain that:

- the record must be in English
- a portfolio of evidence must be maintained to substantiate the CPD activities, and
- the record must include a note of the goals and outcomes for the CP, and a reflection on the contribution of that activity to your goals for enhancing your competence.

To assist you the Board has developed a template that can be used to maintain a CPD record (Appendix 1 of the guidelines), and an example of a completed CPD record (Appendix 2 of the guidelines).

Periodic audits are conducted to ensure that practitioners are compliant with this standard. If you are audited, you must produce your CPD record and CPD portfolio of evidence. Your CPD record and portfolio of evidence should be retained for five years.

Update on practitioner audit

All registered practitioners are required to comply with a range of registration standards that have been developed by the Board that registers them. The registration standards are published on each National Board's website under *Registration standards*.

AHPRA and the National Boards have developed a nationally consistent approach to auditing health practitioners' compliance with mandatory registration standards. Audits of random samples of health practitioners from all professions will occur periodically throughout the year and began late last year.

Audits are an important part of the way that National Boards and AHPRA are better protecting the public by regularly checking the declarations made at renewal time. Audits help to make sure that practitioners are meeting the standards they are required to meet and enhance the trust of the community in the profession by providing important assurances that practitioners are meeting their legal obligations.

What is the process?

The selection for audit is random. You may be audited at any time. If you are selected for audit you will be required to provide further information to support your registration declaration.

You will receive an audit notice in the post, and a checklist that outlines what documentation you need to provide to demonstrate that you meet the standard being audited.

- You will have four weeks to provide the requested documentation to AHPRA.
- AHPRA will review your supporting documentation against the declaration you made in your last renewal application.
- AHPRA may request further information and/or refer cases of non-compliance to the National Board or its delegated committee for decision.
- You will be advised by letter of the outcome of the audit.

For further information, visit the [Audit page](#) on the National Board's website.

National Scheme news

Improving monitoring of conditions on practitioner registration

AHPRA has welcomed calls for stringent monitoring and swift detection of breaches in compliance by registered health practitioners with conditions on their registration.

On 24 March 2015, the Queensland Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) published a report recommending a range of initiatives to strengthen monitoring and compliance in Queensland and the National Scheme.

Since July 2014, health complaints management in Queensland for registered health practitioners has involved a partnership between National Boards, AHPRA and the OHO.

The report's recommendations affirm the sweeping changes AHPRA has already initiated to strengthen its compliance and monitoring program.

AHPRA's detailed response to the OHO and the recommendations in the report is published in the [Corporate publications](#) section of AHPRA's website. Improvements to compliance monitoring add to the overhaul of complaints management in Queensland

that started in 2012. Recent initiatives include preparation for stricter drug and alcohol screening announced in February 2015, the appointment of a national compliance manager and stronger national coordination of the compliance function.

For more information, please read the [media release](#) on AHPRA's website.

AHPRA actions to improve consumer and practitioner experience

Improving the experience of people who have made a notification has been a focus for us since early last year, when we commissioned the Health Issues Centre of Victoria (HIC) to undertake targeted research into the consumer experience when making a notification.

Since then we have made a raft of changes to address the issues this research raised, in particular to make our written communication clearer and easier to understand.

We recently started work on improving the practitioner experience of notifications. Earlier this month, senior leaders from AHPRA and the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) met Australian Medical Association (AMA) leaders about the way we manage notifications – including decision-making protocols, guidance and policies.

Key issues include the time it takes for a notification to go through the process; the tone and clarity of our communication; the need to better explain how the process works and why, and greater transparency wherever legally possible.

We will continue working on addressing the HIC's recommendations, and on other activities that will improve the overall experience of both consumers and practitioners who are the subject of a notification.

Our latest update on this work will be published soon on this page: [Improving our work](#).

Health ministers to consider National Scheme review report in August 2015

Federal and state and territory health ministers will respond to the report of the review of the National Scheme in August this year.

Ministers met in mid-April at the COAG Health Council to discuss a range of national health issues, including the final report of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme Review. The independent review was conducted by Kim Snowball, the former Director General of Health in WA. The review aimed to identify what was working well in the National Scheme and opportunities to improve and strengthen our work to protect the public and facilitate access to health services. According to the report of the meeting, health ministers will consider the recommendations from the review and discuss them further at their meeting in August 2015.

The *COAG Health Council communiqué* is available on the [COAG Health Council website](#).

Top tips for using the register

The [register of practitioners](#) is central to all of our work because it provides up-to-date information about every registered health practitioner. To help the public and employers get the most out of the register, we have developed [these tips](#).

In particular, the tips remind anyone responsible for recruiting health practitioners how to use the register to verify a practitioner's registration status.

Keep in touch with the Board

- Visit the [Chinese Medicine Board website](#) for news about the profession, information on the National Scheme and for registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets.
- Read the [National Board Communiqué](#) each month on the website: these publications inform everyone of the decisions made at the Board's monthly meeting.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the [enquiries link](#) on the bottom of every page.
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (for overseas callers).
- Address mail correspondence to: Prof. Charlie Xue, Chair, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001.

