



Issue 8 July 2004

Dear Registrant

I am happy to be able to report to you that this past twelve months has seen an overall reduction in complaints, with no Formal Hearings.

Whilst that sounds good, there are now 4-5 possible Formal Hearings in the pipeline, covering matters of alleged sexual impropriety, fraud and inappropriate levels of service to patients. It is particularly frustrating to see repeat offenders who just don't seem to learn. We have endeavoured repeatedly to bring to the attention of registrants these types of problems, but offences still occur.

Once the final Register is known for this year, the Board will be sending every registrant a Registrant's Kit. This has been compiled as a means of providing everyone written information regarding the responsibilities required through your registration. All current Guidelines will be included, along with information about the Board itself. It is hoped that this will be useful, and seen as a benefit and will be made available to all future registrants. It will be in loose-leaf format, so that updates can be provided from time to time.

It should be emphasized that all Guidelines are subject to continuous review and update, based on input and their effectiveness. The Medical Practitioners Board of Victoria's advertising guidelines have recently gazetted, and we have been given permission to use them where appropriate. Whilst on this topic, I would like to publicly acknowledge the help of the Medical Practitioners Board of Victoria, for their willingness to share a lot of information with us, and their approval for us to use that information where appropriate. They have a large staff and are better resourced than we are, but the spirit of cooperation with this Board, and all other Boards is most refreshing.

Another recent topic concerning advertising has been the use of specialist titles. It is the view of the Board that this is more properly the province of the profession to determine, as there are significant ramifications regarding training, educational standards, on-going education, referrals etc. The Board therefore, has resolved that no Registrant will be allowed to use the term "specialist". The use of language such as "a special interest in..." may be used. If a person has other degrees or qualifications, reference may be made to such things as: "has additional training or education in paediatrics, orthopaedics, urology etc. etc..." , providing that it is a bona fide qualification, and can be substantiated if required, and is in accordance with Section 60(1)(a) of the Act.

At present, a number of Registrants wish to be registered under the Act as practitioners of Acupuncture, rather than be separately registered by the Chinese Medicine Registration Board, and are completing the requirements for this purpose.

Information and Contacts

If you are unsure or require further information on any topic, please contact the Registrar on:

Telephone (03) 9639 8652

Facsimile (03) 9639 8653

The Board has a home page on the Internet, the address is:

chiroreg.vic.gov.au

Board Members

Dr John Waterhouse D.C.
President

Dr Sue Heringslake, D.C.
Vice President

Dr Robert Cathie D.C.
Chiropractor

Dr John Reggars
Chiropractor

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Mr William Burns
Non chiropractor

Ms Anna Radonic
Non chiropractor

Those of you who have yet to apply need to do so immediately, as come the 31st December 2004, you will be unable to call yourself an Acupuncturist or practice Acupuncture unless you are duly endorsed by this Board or registered with the Chinese Medicine Registration Board. Application forms and documentation can be downloaded from the Board's website or obtained from the Board's office, which will need to be forwarded, completed, to the Registrar without delay.

As mentioned in previous Newsletters, there will be changes to our Act, and other Health Acts; however, this now appears unlikely to occur before the Spring Session of Parliament in 2005.

You will all have recently received your annual registration renewal notice, which this year for the first time includes the ability to pay by "**Bpay**". This has proven to be quite popular, to the extent that the Board is now exploring being able to implement the whole registration process on-line.

Since the last Newsletter, we have engaged a part time Assistant Registrar, so that now if you call the office and hear a new voice, it will be that of Ms Pam Sayers, whom we welcome to the Board.

There will also be a further change to the Board at the end of September. My own position has become available, and after approaching almost nine years with the Board, I have decided to step down. At the time of writing, my replacement is not known, but judging by the quantity and quality of candidates, you should be well served by whomever is appointed.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Board, and I believe that we have achieved a lot with the able and valued help of all my fellow Board members, past and present, and the two Registrars with whom I have worked.

**DR. JOHN WATERHOUSE
PRESIDENT**

REMINDER:

A late fee of \$100.00 applies to renewals of registration received after 30th June, 2004, and a further restoration fee of an additional \$100.00 for restoration to the Register applies to renewals received after 30th September, 2004

ALSO, If you wish to practice Acupuncture, do not forget to apply for endorsement IMMEDIATELY!

Chiropractors and Acupuncture

As many of you will know, with the passing of the *Chinese Medicine Registration Act 2000*, it became necessary for Chiropractors who wished to call themselves Acupuncturists and to practice Acupuncture after the 1st of January, 2005, to seek to become either, registered under the *Chinese Medicine Registration Act 2000*, or to seek endorsement with this Board.

This situation arises from the inclusion of a new section 7A in the *Chiropractors Registration Act 1996*, which places this obligation on Practitioners.

Under this new section, the Board needs to satisfy itself that the Practitioner applying for endorsement has completed a course of study or training which, in the opinion of the Board qualifies that person to practice Acupuncture. If the Board is satisfied that this is the case, then it may endorse that Practitioner to the effect that he or she is exempt from the provisions of the *Chinese Medicine Registration Act 2000*. On the other hand, if the Board is not satisfied, then it may refuse endorsement.

Clearly, one of the most important features of this process is that the Board must satisfy itself that Practitioners have presented evidence of their skills in safe and competent needling practices. This is a clear responsibility of the Board in relation to the requirements of the legislation which charge it with a duty, first and foremost, to protect the public. Relevant guidelines are currently being developed by the Board.

In some instances, especially where Practitioners have studied overseas, it can take a considerable time before the Board has sufficient information on which to form a judgement, but it is in the interests of Practitioners to provide as much detailed information as possible with their applications in order that the whole process does not become inordinately slow, especially now that there are only 5 months remaining before the new legislation takes force.

Some Practitioners simply use dry needling as an adjunct to chiropractic and, whilst this procedure is not necessarily covered by the new legislation, anyone who practices dry needling may not hold themselves out to practice Acupuncture, but, on the other hand are required to comply with all guidelines for infection control relating to the practice of Acupuncture required by the Board.

Needless to say, there has already some confusion arisen regarding what the changes mean and when they come into force.

Some Practitioners have experienced having their claims on third party payers rejected because they are not registered with the Chinese Medicine Registration Board.

This is wrong, and the Board has taken this matter up with these organizations in the strongest possible terms to try and ensure that Practitioners are treated properly in this time of transition.

If any Registrants experience difficulties of this nature, could they please advise me, and provide the name and telephone number of the person who has provided such erroneous advise.

And finally, all of the necessary application forms and information regarding endorsement is available on the Board's website.

So, if you plan to practice Acupuncture in 2005 - get your application for endorsement in to the Board NOW.

KEN BADENOCH
REGISTRAR

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