



Health Assessment (Part 7, Div 2)

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes, the quality of health care may suffer if a health practitioner is unwell. The Health Assessment and Monitoring Program has been established to deal with issues of practitioner health. The program assesses and monitors registrants who suffer from an illness that impacts on their professional performance. Registrants are encouraged to obtain appropriate medical care and work in a supportive environment wherever possible. This process is separate to the Board's disciplinary and professional conduct processes.

The *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999* (the Act) outlines how the Board is to deal with a registrant where there is a "reasonable belief" the registrant suffers from some form of "impairment".

The Act defines "impairment" to mean "that the registrant has a physical or mental impairment, disability, condition or disorder that detrimentally affects, or is likely to affect, the registrant's physical or mental capacity to perform the registrant's profession and includes substance abuse or dependence".

THE HEALTH ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Obtaining Information

If the Board receives a complaint or information about a registrant and reasonably believes that the registrant is impaired it may deal with the registrant under the impairment provisions of the Act.

The Board receives information from a variety of sources including the public, concerned colleagues, treating practitioners, employers and Queensland Health.

The Act permits the Board to collect information from the registrant and others to assist the Board in assessing the registrant's health, for example, from the registrant's treating doctors. The Board respects the doctor-patient relationship and will only request information within terms that are consistent with preserving the treating relationship.

The Independent Health Assessment

As part of the assessment process the Board will usually request that the registrant attends an independent health assessment for the purpose of obtaining a report. This assessment is conducted at the Board's expense.

The Registrant's Submission

The registrant is usually permitted to have a copy of the health assessment report and is entitled to make a written submission in response to the assessor's finding and recommendation/s to the Board. The registrant may also submit to the Board an independent "recent and relevant report".

The Board's Decision after Assessment

After considering the information the Board must determine if the registrant is impaired. If so, the Board must either:

- Enter into an agreed upon undertaking with the registrant, or
- Conduct an investigation, or
- Refer the matter for hearing by a panel or the tribunal, or
- Take no action.

If the Board decides that the registrant is not impaired, no further action will be taken. However, if there are grounds for disciplinary action, the Board will take action under the disciplinary provisions of the Act.

UNDERTAKINGS

Examples of undertakings may include:

- Attending urine drug screening;
- Working only in a supervised position approved by the Board;
- Attending regular reviews with a health practitioner nominated by the Board;
- Attending for treatment with a psychiatrist.



Medical Board of Queensland

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CONTACTS

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