



Information for New Medical Practitioners

Australia is a multi-cultural society with many different ethnic origins and religious beliefs. While medical conditions requiring treatment may be similar, regulatory requirements, healthcare systems and cultural expectations can be very different from that of other countries.

Newly registered doctors, who have not previously practised medicine in Australia, must ensure they obtain the information necessary to enable competent, safe and professional practice. Following is a suggested list of areas in which a medical practitioner should be familiar, but the list should not be considered as exhaustive. The employer and/or supervisor should always provide an induction and orientation program, which covers these matters.

Legislative requirements

- Be aware of responsibilities under various legislation acts relating to medical practitioners eg:-
 - *Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001*
 - *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999*
 - *Health Act 1937*
 - *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996*
 - *Mental Health Act 2000*

Board Policies

- Be aware of the requirements of various Medical Board policies. These can be viewed on the Board's website at www.medicalboard.qld.gov.au

Australian health system

- Be familiar with the requirements of the Health Insurance Commission with respect to Medicare – where possible attend information sessions held by the Health Insurance Commission
- Understand the differences between the private and public health system and how to refer within these systems
- Understand discharge planning –be familiar with the various rules of community providers and how to liaise between the hospital/GP/community interface

- Be familiar with radiology and medical imaging services available – types of tests available, how to organise referrals in the public and private setups
- Understand the mechanisms for transfers and retrieval of patients.

Orientation to the practice, local services and health services

This should include:

- Introduction to staff and explanation of roles and skills
- Description of local ancillary medical services including functional relationships and nature of services provided
- Define limits of clinical responsibility

Prescribing

- Understand the requirements for legally acceptable prescriptions
- Be familiar with the generic and brand names of drugs commonly used in Australia and the appropriate use of controlled drugs
- Have an understanding of PBS scripts, Authority Scripts and script writing for Department of Veteran Affairs patients
- Be aware of obligations under the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996. The publication “What Doctors Need to Know” and the sections relative to prescribing controlled drugs can be accessed on the internet at:
<http://www.medicalboard.qld.gov.au/pdfs/what-doctors-need.pdf>

The patient/doctor relationship

- Have an understanding of the patient/doctor relationship in the Australian setting
- Be aware of boundary issues in medical practice
- Be aware that language barriers are a common problem and language difference and problems of meaning should be understood

Cultural awareness

- Be sensitive to awareness of potential culturally offensive behaviours when providing healthcare to particular cultural groups in Australia
- Understand the interactions generally expected by patients in Australia, which may be different from that experienced in other countries

General

Note that:-

- The Board does not endorse the practice of self-prescribing and/or prescribing for family and friends. Nor does the Board encourage self-referral, or referral of friends and family
- The Doctors Health Advisory Service provides a confidential service to doctors experiencing health problems and can be contacted on (07) 3833 4352

- There should be an understanding of:-
 - Appropriate medical record keeping standards
 - Confidentiality requirements
 - Quality Management Principles
 - Clinical Risk Management
 - Australian Standards and Guidelines eg Infection Control/Needle Stick Injuries
 - Requirements for notification of Communicable /Notifiable Diseases
- Practitioners are encouraged to avail themselves of appropriate CME activities/mentoring either through the appropriate college programs or Divisions of General Practice
- Practitioners should be aware of the importance of income protection insurance and medical indemnity insurance

