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Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Update on lapsed registrants

11 February 2011

Lapsed off the register? Fast track available now

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) is contacting health practitioners whose registration has lapsed because they did not renew their registration on time.

Each year, health practitioners are responsible for renewing their registration. In the past, between 5% and 10% practitioners do not renew, either because they opt out of registration, or did not renew on time. This year, 4.7% lapsed in the recent renewal phase (late period ended on 31 January).

The National Law, which underpins the national scheme, is unambiguous: the registration of practitioners who do not renew on time (within one month of their registration expiry date) must be removed from the National Registers.

There is a fast track to re-apply for registration if a practitioner did not renew on time. The [fast track application form](#) is published online. AHPRA usually processes fast-track applications within 48 hours, unless the practitioner makes a positive criminal history declaration in which case it can take more time.

Under the National Law, re-applying for registration after lapsing is not limited to an administrative process – there is a need to make sure the public is protected and that proper safeguards are in place.

As required by law, AHPRA has given Medicare the list of practitioners whose registration has lapsed. Medicare will now contact practitioners whose patients are no longer entitled to a rebate. Practitioners can apply through the fast track if they wish to return to practise. A special AHPRA hotline has been set up for any practitioner contacted by Medicare who need additional advice or information.

AHPRA has previously sent a registration renewal reminder to all registrants due to renew; sent follow-up letters warning of the risk of lapsing to all nurses; emailed and SMSd a renewal reminder before the end of the late period to every practitioner who had provided these contact details; emailed and SMSd advice on lapsing to every practitioner who has provided this contact information; and is now making a phone call to all practitioners whose registration has lapsed for whom no email or mobile number is available. AHPRA is working with state and territory health departments and professional associations to support the renewal process.

Some practitioners whose registration has lapsed have deliberately opted out and chosen not to renew their registration. AHPRA is developing an IT solution so these practitioners can advise AHPRA that they do not wish to be registered, so no further registration renewal reminders will be sent.

The registration of close to 8000 practitioners lapsed between the start of the national scheme in July and January 2011. Only 500 (6.25%) of these practitioners used the fast track to re-apply for registration. Data is not yet available on the number of practitioners who use the fast track after their registration lapsed at the end of January.

AHPRA CEO, Mr Martin Fletcher, said AHPRA had put more resources into improving services and information flow to registrants.

“We have boosted our phone capacity, increased the operating hours of our contact centre, put more resources in processing fast tracks and renewal applications and put in place a specialist response dedicated to working with Medicare and registrants whose registration has lapsed,” he said.

“More initiatives and web-based registrant services are planned and we are doing everything we can to support practitioners getting back on the Register if they choose to return to practise,” Mr Fletcher said.

For more information

- Visit www.ahpra.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 7 3666 4911 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200