



Health assessment and monitoring

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes, the quality of health care may suffer if a health practitioner is unwell. The Board has established health assessment and monitoring to deal with issues of practitioner health. Health assessment and monitoring is separate from the disciplinary processes of the Board.

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”.

WHAT THE BOARD DOES

Initial assessment

The Board can deal with a complaint or information as an impairment if it reasonably believes that the registrant is impaired.

The Board may receive information from a variety of sources including the public, concerned colleagues and employers. Often it is the registrant who notifies the Board of a medical condition that may impact on their practice.

The Act permits the Board to collect information from the registrant and others to assist the Board in its assessment. The Board collects this information with the registrant’s full knowledge and consent.

As part of the assessment the Board may request the registrant to attend for an independent health assessment for the purpose of obtaining a report. This assessment is conducted at the Board’s expense and the information obtained is used to assist the Board in its assessment.

The registrant is usually permitted to have a copy of the health assessment report and is entitled to make a written submission about the report. The registrant may also submit a recent and relevant assessment report that she or he has undergone independently.

The Board’s decision after assessment

Upon conclusion of the assessment the Board must determine if the registrant is impaired and then must:

- Enter into an agreed upon undertaking with the registrant;
- Conduct an investigation;
- Refer the matter to the Professional Conduct Review Panel or the Health Practitioners Tribunal; or
- Take no action.

If the Board decides that the registrant is not impaired, but there are other grounds for disciplinary action the Board will take appropriate action under the disciplinary provisions of the Act.

Health assessment committee

The Board may establish a health assessment committee where the Board decides the registrant is impaired and:

- The registrant is not competent to enter into an undertaking;
- Agreement can not be reached on an undertaking; or
- The registrant is not cooperating with the assessment process.

The functions of the health assessment committee are:

- To assess the registrant;
- To make findings; and
- To inform the Board about the nature and extent of any impairment and make recommendations.

The registrant is entitled to make a submission to the committee including any recent and relevant assessment report that she or he has undergone independently.

At the conclusion of its assessment the committee must prepare a report to the Board. The registrant is usually permitted to have a copy of this report and is entitled to make a written submission in response to it.



Health assessment and monitoring (continued)

The Board's decision upon receipt of the committee's report

After considering the committee's report the Board must decide if the registrant is impaired and must:

- Impose conditions;
- Order the registrant to attend for further health assessments;
- Enter into undertakings with the registrant;
- Investigate the registrant;
- Refer the registrant to the Professional Conduct Review Panel or Health Practitioners Tribunal;
or
- Take no further action.

UNDERTAKINGS AND CONDITIONS

Undertakings and conditions allow the Board to monitor the registrant to ensure that they remain well and perform their professional duties safely. Some examples may include:

- Attending to random urine drug screening;
- Working only in a supervised position approved by the Board; and/or
- Attending for periodic review by a medical practitioner nominated by the Board.

For further information contact Health Assessment and Monitoring, telephone 07 3405 6013, fax 07 3234 1013 or email healthassessment@healthregboards.qld.gov.au