

SENATE OF AUSTRALIA, MAY 2011.

SENATE INQUIRY: Administration of health practitioner registration and endorsement by AHPRA.

This APPLICATION by [REDACTED]

Parameters of this [REDACTED] Submission:

This submission regards the conduct of AHPRA specifically in relation to accreditation and endorsement of medical practitioners to practice medical acupuncture in Australia. The proper process of accreditation and endorsement enables fully qualified medical practitioners to practice medical acupuncture as part of a medical consultation, and claim this as a medical item number under Medicare Australia. In order to practice Medical Acupuncture, a medical qualification is required, so that a proper medical diagnosis can be made before any treatment occurs.

Dear Honorable Senators,

We understand the two major guiding principles of the National Registration legislation is to register and endorse appropriately qualified medical practitioners and eliminate cross border medical registration bureaucracy. However this process should not be used to prevent a practitioner from registration or endorsement, and consequently prevent patient access to medical care.

These guiding principles have been broken on many of occasions by AHPRA and so far over 400 doctors have been affected:

- They have they failed to endorse a number of practitioners for medical acupuncture. For example, Dr [REDACTED] from Victoria, even though that doctor satisfies all the requirements of registration and endorsement; as a medical practitioner and medical acupuncturist since 2003.
- Another Queensland GP working in a low socioeconomic area in Queensland. He received his medical registration certificate from AHPRA on May 24th 2011, but has not been endorsed for acupuncture despite his full acupuncture qualifications and long-term recognition by Medicare. AHPRA may of course state that they are not required to endorse medical acupuncture until July 1st 2012 ie next year, however this arbitrarily designed system now precludes over 400 doctors from crossing the State border into Victoria; totally against the purpose of the legislation.
- These failures to properly register medical practitioners, who have been practicing medicine and medical acupuncture for many years, could be construed as restraint of trade and in breach of the trade practices act.

It is also worthy of note that a similar process of endorsement for medical practitioners

with Obstetrics and Gynaecology qualifications has had no such problems.

These problems have been going on for more than six months and have not been rectified. Furthermore AHPRA has made no contact with the [REDACTED] they have not replied to correspondence, and have continued to put out misinformation about registration of doctors for medical acupuncture. Some of this misinformation has concerned doctors to the point of stopping practice.

Courses of Action available.

1. Reinstall the JCCMA -The Joint Consultative Committee of Medical Acupuncture – (Tripartite committee of Rural & GP Colleges & AMAC)

In the process of transferring medical acupuncture endorsement nationally to AHPRA, the original organization performing this process has been left out. The JCCMA, has been processing the accreditation/endorsement of doctors in medical acupuncture for the last 10 years in Victoria, and should continue to do so at a national level. The failure of AHPRA to comprehend and complete even the simple processing of existing medical practitioners highlights the significant inadequacies of the system. This could be rectified by the installation of the JCCMA at the national level to continue its clearly useful work. The JCCMA has been endorsed by Health Ministers from both sides of politics in Victoria to the Australian Ministerial Council of Health Ministers.

2. Immediately commence endorsement of all eligible current medical practitioners to ensure interstate mobility.

3. Medicare Australia can expedite this process by supplying a list of the currently endorsed medical practitioners to AHPRA so that they can be endorsed immediately on the database.

I would be happy to supply details as required.

Yours sincerely

Dr [REDACTED]

MBBS, BMedSci, MSc, DipRACOG, FRACGP, FAMAC.

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