

Media release

4 April 2011

Board consults on two core guidelines

The Medical Board of Australia has today released for consultation two important new draft guidelines – one on sexual boundaries and the other on practitioners with blood borne infectious diseases.

The role of the National Board is to protect the public, including by developing guidance for the profession. Both draft guidelines complement the Board's expectations of medical practitioners outlined in *Good Medical Practice – A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia*. The two draft guidelines are open for consultation until 27 May 2011 and are published [here](#).

The Chair of the Medical Board of Australia, Dr Joanna Flynn, encouraged everyone with an interest in either of these important issues for the profession to participate in the consultation and provide their views to the Board.

"Our job is to guide the profession. The guidance we provide is strengthened by a consultative process that draws on the views of practitioners, the community, governments and many others," Dr Flynn said.

"While it is the Board's responsibility to set policy that helps keep patients' safe, it is better for everyone when that policy is anchored into the feedback provided by the profession and other stakeholders," Dr Flynn said.

The draft guidelines on blood borne infectious diseases set out the Board's expectations of all registered medical practitioners and medical students about knowing whether they are infected with a blood-borne virus. The draft guidelines also define the limits on the scope of practice of medical practitioners who are infected with a blood-borne virus. The draft guidelines are based on national standards for the management of blood-borne viruses in health care workers. While the Board is mindful that the current national standards for health care workers developed by the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) are under review it believes it is necessary to have guidance available for registered medical practitioners and medical students in the short term. Once the CDNA standards are finalised the Board will review its guidelines to ensure consistency.

The draft guidelines on sexual boundaries set out what the Board expects of the profession in this area and will create a nationally consistent policy framework. The current draft guidelines bring together the policies adopted by individual medical boards before the national registration and accreditation scheme was introduced and are consistent with approaches taken by most international medical regulatory authorities.

[For more information](#)

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