



Medical Council

OF ★ NEW ★ SOUTH ★ WALES

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2013/14 – 2015/16

Introduction

The Medical Council of NSW was created on 1 July 2010 following the commencement of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The Medical Council is an independent statutory body, established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW)*.

The Medical Council works in partnership with the Health Care Complaints Commission to regulate the performance, conduct and health of medical practitioners and medical students in NSW. The Health Care Complaints Commission is the independent investigator and prosecutor of serious complaints and works in consultation with the Medical Council in the assessment and management of complaints.

The Medical Council is responsible for managing complaints about the conduct, professional performance and health of medical practitioners whose principal place of practice is NSW and medical students who study in NSW. The Medical Council's regulatory powers are set out in the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW)*.

The Medical Council's paramount consideration, when exercising its functions under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW)*, must be the protection of the health and safety of the public.

The Medical Council is constituted by nominated members who serve the Medical Council for a prescribed term. These members are appointed by the Governor of NSW. The Medical Council cannot employ staff. Instead the Medical Council is assisted in its functions by staff who are employed by the Health Professional Councils Authority (HPCA) which is a business unit of the Health Administration Corporation.

The Medical Council members agree that a three year strategic plan is required in order to ensure that the Medical Council achieves its aims of effectively and efficiently upholding the protection of the health and safety of the public and raising standards across the medical profession.

Strategic Initiatives

By 2016, the Medical Council will have progressed from managing and adjusting to the organisational change following the commencement of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme and established itself as a proactive, innovative and effective organisation and a leader in the medical regulatory environment.

To do this, the Medical Council has identified a need to implement strategies and commence work to:

1. Improve its communication with stakeholders
2. Undertake research in order to assess the effectiveness of its programs/interventions and to inform quality assurance review and processes
3. Direct resources and interventions towards practitioners who are more likely to be demonstrating unsatisfactory professional performance
4. Research and review evidence to inform effective testing and monitoring protocols for impaired practitioners and develop risk minimisation strategies
5. Educate and train Medical Council members, hearing members and performance assessors/auditors and evaluate performance
6. Identify and assess emerging regulatory issues and pre-emptively and proactively minimise harm
7. Improve internal decision-making to ensure timely, efficient, consistent, transparent and appropriate outcomes
8. Develop performance indicators to monitor activity to ensure effectiveness and timeliness.

The Medical Council recognises that whilst each of these initiatives is important, it needs to prioritise its strategic initiatives to ensure that it is successful in achieving its desired aims by 2016.

For this reason, the Medical Council has identified the three strategic initiatives identified below that it will commence in 2013/14. The Medical Council will then evaluate whether or not additional initiatives can be commenced in the subsequent financial years. Despite not intending to commence the other strategic initiatives, the Medical Council still recognises their importance and for this reason, wishes to record in this plan the aims and desired outcomes of the initiatives which will be deferred until after the 2013/14 financial year.

The three Strategic Initiatives agreed to by the members of the Council for 2013/14 are:

1. Communication

Aim

To establish ongoing and effective communication with key stakeholder groups.

Outcomes

Stakeholders understand the role of the Medical Council, its protective jurisdiction, its functions under the Law and how and why its interventions and programs affect medical practitioners and medical students.

Measure of Success

Medical Council's representatives and/or HPCA staff arrange meetings with stakeholders and report on discussions and outcomes. A report will be tabled at the Medical Council meeting in June 2014 which identifies the issues discussed at these meetings and any actions from the meetings.

The Medical Council publishes a quarterly newsletter which is circulated to NSW medical practitioners and if possible, students.

Information concerning the Medical Council's activities is proactively published on its website.

The Medical Council's activities, initiatives and position in relation to key regulatory issues are reported through the medical media, as appropriate.

Surveys of registered medical practitioners, medical students or respondent practitioners/students demonstrate an understanding of the Medical Council's role and its programs.

2. Research

Aim

Undertake research to evaluate the effectiveness of the Medical Council's programs/interventions, to identify areas for improvement, to audit current processes and procedures and to inform quality assurance review and processes.

Outcomes

Research will:

1. Measure the effectiveness of the Medical Council's programs and interventions
2. Drive consistency in decision-making
3. Identify subsets for at risk practitioners that can help inform future decision-making
4. Review regulatory or process failures and identify root causes to improve outcomes
5. Enhance and improve the Medical Council's profile amongst stakeholders

Measure of Success

Report to be tabled at June 2014 Medical Council meeting to assess performance as compared to strategic aim.

At least one research project and one quality assurance project to have been commenced.

Automated reports publish data on a quarterly basis on the Medical Council's website.

Information/data is reported in the medical press which may inform stakeholders about trends over time or groups at risk with Medical Council narrative concerning message/learning points.

3. Timely, Efficient, Consistent, Transparent and Appropriate Decisions

Aim

To review internal processes and delegations to improve decision-making.

Outcomes

The Medical Council improves internal decision-making to ensure timely, efficient, consistent, transparent and appropriate regulatory decisions.

Measure of Success

The Medical Council continues to make effective, consistent and timely decisions in light of increased complaint numbers and associated regulatory activity.

Strategic initiatives deferred until after 2013/14 financial year

The following strategic initiatives were also considered by the Medical Council. However the Medical Council members have agreed to defer commencement of these additional strategic initiatives until after 2013/14:

- **Targeting Resources**

Aim

To direct resources and interventions towards practitioners who are more likely to be demonstrating unsatisfactory professional performance.

Outcomes

Resources are better directed towards assessing practitioners who are more likely to be demonstrating unsatisfactory professional performance. The Medical Council is less reactive and more proactive in assessing medical practitioner's performance. This will enhance public protection and improve standards. This initiative will benefit from information that will flow from the three initiatives that are being commenced in 2013/4

- **Testing and Monitoring protocols**

Aim

To evaluate current testing protocols to ensure they are effective, valid and underpinned by robust science and are evidence based.

Outcomes

The Medical Council is confident that its testing and monitoring of impaired medical practitioners is ensuring public protection whilst impaired medical practitioners work safely and deliver appropriate care.

- **Education and Training**

Aim

To ensure:

1. The appropriate and transparent selection of Medical Council members, hearing members and assessors/auditors
2. The appropriate education/training of these members so that they undertake their role and exercise their functions in order to enhance public protection and improve standards
3. Appropriate evaluation of such members

Outcomes

The Medical Council increases transparency over its processes and strives to achieve improved decision-making, which will improve public and professional confidence in its role.

- **Pre-emptively and Proactively minimise harm**

Aim

To become less reactive and more proactive in protecting the public and improving standards.

Outcomes

By reviewing its data and other information, the Medical Council can become more proactive and less reactive, and identify emerging regulatory issues. The Medical Council could then take steps to minimise harm and improve standards.

- **Performance Indicators**

Aim

To ensure the Medical Council continues to respond to complaints in an effective, proportional and timely way.

Outcomes

The Medical Council is an effective and responsive regulator and measures its performance to ensure it maintains public protection and enhances stakeholder confidence in its role. This initiative will benefit from information that will flow from the three initiatives that are being commenced in 2013/4

Approved by the NSW Medical Council at its meeting held on 1 October 2013.