

Statement

12 June 2012

When it is necessary to be registered as a Medical Radiation Practitioner? Information for Sonographers and Practitioners undertaking Ultrasound

Purpose

This statement clarifies the application of the National Law to sonographers and other health practitioners using ultrasound.

Why the Medical Radiation Practice Board is publishing this information

The Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia (the Board) has received questions from professional associations in relation to registration for "sonographers".

The Board has published "When is it necessary to be registered as a Medical Radiation Practitioner" in May 2012 that addresses many of the questions raised. However there is still confusion in relation to those practitioners using the title "sonographer".

Protection of Title

Medical Radiation practitioners are registered under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (National Law) as in force in each state and territory. The National Law limits the use of certain titles. The protected titles for Medical Radiation practitioners are (see s.113 of the National Law).

- Medical radiation practitioner
- Medical imaging technologist
- Diagnostic radiographer
- Radiographer
- Nuclear medicine technologist
- Nuclear medicine scientist
- Radiation therapist

Specifically the National Law does not limit the use or protect the title of 'sonographer'.

Restricted practices

The National Law regulates very few specific practices. There are three restricted practices in the National Law: restricted dental acts (defined), manipulation of the cervical spine and prescription of an optical

appliance. The activity of sonography or ultrasound is not regulated by the National Law. While ultrasound is a modality that is integral to medical radiation practice, it is also used by other professions within and outside the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

Practitioners who are using the title sonographer do not need to be registered unless they:

- are also using a protected title (listed above) or holding themselves out to the public as being qualified as a Medical Radiation Practitioner (or other health practitioner regulated under the National Law), and
- need to be registered as a health practitioner under the National Law eg because their employer or insurer requires them to be registered.

Industrial Relations

The Board has received some queries about the registration of sonographers who are employed under an industrial award that includes medical radiation practitioners. The Board does not consider employment under an Industrial Award is using a protected title under the National Law.

The primary objective of the Board is the protection of the public by registering only practitioners who hold a qualification for registration. An agreement between an employer and employee is essentially a private matter and not one in which the Board has a role. The Board's role is determining an employee's application for registration under the National Law, including whether the practitioner is qualified for registration.

Conclusion

The National Law does not require registration where a person is using the title of "sonographer" to describe their practice as a health professional and is not using any protected title under the National Law nor holding themselves out as a practitioner registered under the National Law.

A person who is appropriately qualified for registration as a Medical Radiation Practitioner may apply to the Board for registration. The statement "Who Needs to be Registered as a Medical Radiation Practitioner" published at <http://www.medicalradiationpracticeboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines.aspx> may help these practitioners decide whether or not they should be registered.