

## Joint media statement

# Health practitioner regulators united: family violence is unacceptable

### Key points

- Australia's health practitioner regulators are united in their view that family violence is unacceptable.
- Australia's health practitioner regulators have issued a joint position statement about family violence.
- Health practitioners play an essential role in the early detection, support, referral, and delivery of specialised treatment of those experiencing family violence.
- Perpetrating family violence is not acceptable and could lead to regulatory action for registered health practitioners.
- We encourage any person aware of a health practitioner perpetrating family violence to provide information to the police and appropriate regulatory body.

**27 November 2024**

Australia's health practitioner regulators are united in their view that family violence is unacceptable.

For the first time ever, these regulators today issued a joint statement reminding practitioners of the critical contribution they can make in Australia's response to tackling family violence.

The statement recognises the role of regulators in the collective effort to end family violence by supporting victim-survivors, setting clear expectations of health practitioners, taking regulatory action as appropriate and condemning all forms of family violence.

Health practitioners are often the first point of contact for victim-survivors, so play an essential role in the early detection, support, referral, and delivery of specialised treatment to those experiencing family violence.

Health practitioners are also reminded that their own conduct, as well as that of their colleagues, must reflect the trust and confidence the public have in them for safe and effective healthcare. Regulators work to ensure health practitioners are safe, ethical, and professional for the protection of the public.

Family violence can also be a serious crime and a violation of human rights. It is a gross departure from the ethical standards of behaviour expected of health practitioners. Health practitioners who are perpetrators of family violence could face suspension, cancellation, the imposition of conditions, or refusal of registration.

As regulators we are committed to minimising the risk of adding to victim-survivors' trauma or exposing them to further risk of harm. We seek to respond to victim-survivors' complaints about health practitioners

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency  
National Boards

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Ahpra and the National Boards regulate these registered health professions: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, medical, medical radiation practice, midwifery, nursing, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, paramedicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry and psychology.

in a trauma-informed way. This means prioritising the safety and dignity of victim-survivors and respectfully and sensitively supporting them through the health complaint management process.

We encourage any person aware of a health practitioner perpetrating family violence to provide information to the police and appropriate regulatory body. A list of health practitioner regulator contact details as well as police, family violence information and support services are included in the joint position statement.

The joint position statement on family violence by regulators of health practitioners can be [viewed here](#).

We would like to thank members of the National Lived Experience Advisory Council for Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence for providing us with very valuable feedback about this Joint Position on Family Violence.

## About the regulators

**The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the National Boards:** Ahpra's primary role is to protect the public. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the National Boards work together to ensure that Australia's registered health practitioners are suitably trained, qualified, and safe to practise. Ahpra and the National Boards regulate sixteen registered health professions. Practitioners must meet our standards to be registered. For example, they must have approved qualifications and continue to learn and develop their skills.

**The Office of the Health Ombudsman (Queensland):** The Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) is the place to contact if you have a complaint or notification to make about a health service provider in Queensland. The OHO is an independent body established under the *Queensland Health Ombudsman Act 2013*. Its main objectives are to protect the health and safety of the public, promote professional, safe, and competent practice by health practitioners, promote high standards of service delivery by health service organisations, and maintain public confidence in the management of complaints and other matters relating to the provision of health services.

**The Health Care Complaints Commission (NSW):** The Health Care Complaints Commission acts to protect public health and safety by resolving, investigating, and prosecuting complaints about health care. It is an independent body set up under the *NSW Health Care Complaints Act 1993*. It has a central role in maintaining the integrity of the NSW health system, with the overarching aim of protecting the health and safety of individuals and the community. The Commission deals with complaints about all health services and providers in NSW including health organisations, registered health practitioners and non-registered health practitioners.

**The Health Professional Councils Authority (NSW):** The HPCA works with the 15 NSW Health Professional Councils to protect the health and safety of the public in New South Wales by managing complaints about health practitioners and students. The HPCA and Councils work with the Health Care Complaints Commission to decide the best way a complaint should be managed. In managing a complaint, the Councils and the HPCA will work with the practitioner to raise their level of professional performance and to ensure high professional standards are maintained. The Councils' and the HPCA's work are governed by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW).

## Contact us

### Media enquiries

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- Health Professional Councils Authority NSW): [hpca-communications@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:hpca-communications@health.nsw.gov.au)
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