

OPTOMETRISTS BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY NEWSLETTER JUNE 2007

Board members

Mr Bill Robertson
Mr Rollo Manning
Ms Samantha McCue
Practitioner member (vacant)
Practitioner member (vacant)

Board support

Ms Jill Huck	Registrar
Ms Cate Lynch	Policy & Research Officer
Ms Julie Burrows	Registrations Manager
Ms Sally Ozolins	Complaints Manager

Message from the Registrar

Welcome to the first edition of the Optometrists Board Newsletter for 2007. The past year has been a busy one for the Board, particularly in relation to ocular therapeutics. In December 2006 the Legislative Assembly passed the *Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Amendment Act* (PADDA), enabling optometrists to prescribe a limited range of ocular therapeutic substances. This edition contains detailed information about eligibility for ocular therapeutic authorisation and how the Board is regulating this new area of practice.

As you are aware, Board vacancies were recently advertised and we are now waiting on the Minister to announce the appointments. Tony Hill, who has been the Board Chair for the past three years, has not sought reappointment at this time. I would like to thank Tony for his contribution to the Board over the past nine years and acknowledge his leadership as Chair. On behalf of the Board and HPLA staff I wish Tony well and look forward to welcoming a new Board member in the near future.

Best wishes,
Jill Huck
Registrar

Board Website

Previous newsletters have indicated that a Board website was under development. The website is now live at:

<http://www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards>

All Registration Boards are accessed through this common pathway. Once you are at the Health Professions Licensing Authority homepage, click on the link to *Optometrists Board* to go to the Board's webpage.

The site provides access to:

- Applications for registration and ocular therapeutics authorisation
- Applications for renewal of registration
- Policies and Guidelines
- *Health Practitioners Act 2004*
- Board contact details and
- The register of optometrists (at a given date).

Policies are posted to the Board's website as they are developed and updated. The newsletter is also available at the website.

OCULAR THERAPEUTICS

What does the change to PADDA mean?

Previously, optometrists were limited to possessing and administering substances for emergencies through a permit, approved by the Chief Poisons Officer (Section 42 of PADDA).

Section 29 of PADDA "Supply of substances for therapeutic use" has been amended so that, subject to conditions and restrictions set by the Optometrists Board, optometrists can **sell** or **supply** (prescribe) Schedule 2, 3, or 4 ocular therapeutic substances. This enables the Board to authorise and set conditions and restrictions for optometrists possessing, using, prescribing and selling substances for the treatment of eye conditions.

Ocular Therapeutic Authorisation

Optometrists with qualifications in Ocular Therapeutics accredited by the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ) are eligible to apply to the Board for authorisation to sell or supply ocular therapeutics.

The courses currently accredited by OCANZ are:

- QUT Graduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics
- University of Melbourne Postgraduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics
- University of Auckland, The Auckland Programme in Ocular Therapeutics
- University of Auckland and University of Melbourne undergraduate program (graduates from 2006).

Separate forms are available at the website for applicants applying for authorisation, depending upon whether they are applying at

the time of registration or seeking to add the authorisation to their registration.

What conditions apply to ocular therapeutic authorisation?

Optometrists with ocular therapeutic authorisation must practise in accordance with the Board-approved ocular therapeutics protocol, which is issued upon authorisation. The protocol outlines the requirements in relation to clinical management, including the use of clinical pathways and appropriate referral, issuing prescriptions, record maintenance and storage of drugs. Authorised practitioners must maintain competence through continuing professional education.

Which ocular therapeutics can be sold or supplied (prescribed)?

The Board has approved a restricted formulary, (Schedule B attached), which authorised practitioners can prescribe in topical form only. The limited circumstances under which authorised practitioners can sell ocular therapeutics are outlined in the protocol. The ocular therapeutics formulary has recently been issued to all pharmacies in the Northern Territory.

The Board has also approved a “possess and administer” formulary, consisting of commonly used diagnostic substances, which all registered optometrists are authorised to hold and use (Schedule A, attached). If your use of scheduled substances does not exceed this list, a permit from the Chief Poisons Officer is no longer required. Optometrists are reminded that, as a condition of their registration, they must meet the OAA entry-level competency standards, which include competence in the use of diagnostic pharmaceuticals. This means that optometrists gaining their qualification prior to 1983 are required to have undertaken specific training in diagnostics.

How does the pharmacist know the optometrist is authorised to sell or supply?

Pharmacists can verify an optometrist's authorisation either by sighting the practitioner's practising certificate (which notes the authorisation) or by contacting the HPLA. It is anticipated that with the move to a new registration database, expected by the end of the year, this information will be available through the online register.

How will the Board monitor supply of ocular therapeutics?

Therapeutically authorised practitioners are required to maintain prescribing records and report their prescribing to the Board quarterly. Reporting forms are issued to all authorised practitioners. Prescribing reports will be reviewed by a Therapeutics Advisory Committee, who will also recommend to the Board any amendments to the formulary required by changes to standard treatment regimes. The committee will comprise a therapeutically qualified optometrist, Board representative, ophthalmologist, pharmacist and general practitioner.

The Board's policy and application forms for ocular therapeutic authorisation are now available at the website. If you have any questions, contact Cate Lynch, the Board's Policy and Research Officer on (08) 89994167.

Know your Act

Optometrists and 11 other health profession groups are regulated under the *Health Practitioners Act 2004* in the Northern Territory. The purpose of the Act is to ensure public protection.

The following information is provided to emphasise the importance of ensuring your Annual Practising Certificate is current, correct and secure. In addition, information in relation to offences of dishonesty has been provided.

Section 40 (2) Practising certificates

A practising certificate issued to a registered health practitioner is evidence until the due date, or the date determined by the relevant Board, that –

- (a) The health practitioner is authorised to practise in the Territory in the category of registration specified in the certificate subject to the conditions, if any, specified in the certificate;
- (b) The health practitioner is authorised to practise in the restricted practice areas, if any, subject to the conditions, if any, specified in the certificate.

Section 41 Replacement and amendment of certificates

- (1) If the relevant Board is satisfied that a certificate issued by it has been lost or destroyed, it may issue a replacement certificate (that is marked accordingly) on the replacement certificate fee being paid.

(2) The relevant Board, by notice, may require a health practitioner to surrender a certificate issued to the health practitioner to enable it to issue a new certificate with amended particulars.

(3) The Registrar of a Board has the same powers in relation to an interim certificate of registration or enrolment as the Board has under this section in relation to certificates issued by it.

(4) A health practitioner who is given a notice under subsection (2) must surrender the certificate to the relevant Board –

- (a) Within 7 days after receiving the notice; or
- (b) within any longer period that the Board allows and specifies in the notice.

(5) A person who is given a notice by a Registrar under subsection (3) must surrender his or her interim certificate to the Registrar –

- (a) Within 7 days after receiving the notice; or
- (b) Within any longer period that the Registrar allows and specifies in the notice.

Penalty: 50 penalty units.

Section 42 Offences in relation to certificates

A person who is issued with a certificate of registration must not –

- (a) Lend or agree to lend that certificate to another person; or
- (b) Allow that certificate to be used by another person.

Penalty: 500 penalty units.

Section 106 Offences of dishonesty

(1) A person must not make or produce a false or misleading statement, either orally or in writing, in connection with –

- (a) An application, assessment or inquiry;
- (b) A preliminary investigation into a complaint; or
- (c) An investigation carried out by an inspector.

(2) A person must not forge or change –

- (a) a certificate of registration or enrolment;
- (b) an interim certificate of registration or enrolment; or
- (c) a practising certificate.

(3) A person must not forge or change a degree, diploma or other evidence of qualifications for registration or enrolment under this Act.

(4) An offence against this section is a regulatory offence.

Section 46 Notice of change of name or address

A health practitioner must, within 30 days of changing his or her name, personal address or business address, give the relevant Board notice of the change and the new name or address, as the case may be.

Failing to update the Board with changes of name / address details means that you will not receive any correspondence from the Board. This means you will miss out on:

- Updates on changes to policy
- Board newsletters and
- Your application to renew registration.

The Board seeks your assistance in ensuring that the name and contact details maintained on the database are current.

Registration Statistics

As at 30 May 2007 there were

- 69 optometrists registered in the Northern Territory
- 4 optometrists with ocular therapeutic authorisation.

Professional Conduct

As at 30 May 2007 there were no professional conduct matters before the Board.

Contact details

Optometrists Board of the Northern Territory
GPO Box 4221 DARWIN NT 0801
Telephone +61 8 8999 4157
Fax +61 8 8999 4196
Email healthprofessions.ths@nt.gov.au

OPTOMETRISTS BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Ocular Therapeutics Formulary

Registered optometrists

A registered optometrist who practises in accordance with the Optometrists Association of Australia Competency Standard for entry-level may be authorised to supply¹ substances listed under Schedule A for the purpose of diagnosing ocular conditions.

Registered optometrists with authorisation for ocular therapeutics

Authorised optometrists may sell² or supply substances listed under Schedule B in topical form only. All ocular therapeutic substances must be used in accordance with the Board's Ocular Therapeutics Protocol and clinical pathways, and through co-management and referral where appropriate.

Schedule A	Schedule B
Amethocaine	Aciclovir
Cyclopentolate	Atropine
Lignocaine	Chloramphenicol
Oxybuprocaine	Dexamethasone
Phenylephrine	Diclofenac
Pilocarpine	Fluorometholone
Proxymetacaine	Flurbiprofen
Tropicamide	Framycetin
	Gentamicin sulfate
	Homatropine
	Hydrocortisone
	Indomethacin
	Ketorolac
	Ketotifen
	Levocabastine
	Lodoxamide
	Neomycin/ PolymyxinB/Bacitracin
	Neomycin/ PolymyxinB/ Gramicidin
	Olopatadine
	Prednisolone
	Sodium cromoglycate
	Tetracycline
	Tobramycin

¹ Under section 29 of the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act "supply" includes administer and having in possession for the purpose of supply or administration.

² Under section 29 of the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act optometrists may issue a prescription for or supply ocular therapeutics with or without charge. Only under limited circumstances, which are described in the Ocular Therapeutics Protocol, may optometrists "sell" directly to the public.