



Health Ministers Meeting (HMM): *Communique* **14 December 2022**

Health Ministers from all Australian governments met today to discuss a range of issues, including cosmetic surgery reforms, primary care and COVID-19 case numbers.

Update on the progress of reforms to the cosmetic surgery industry

On 2 September 2022, Health Ministers agreed to take urgent action to improve safety in the cosmetic surgery industry to protect the public. Health Ministers are pleased to confirm there has been significant progress on the suite of reforms they instigated to set clear standards by defining the skills and qualifications for doctors who perform cosmetic surgery.

Milestones to date include:

- successful completion of the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) required for Health Ministers to consider changing the National Law to ensure the title of ‘surgeon’ is used only by doctors who have the appropriate training (see Attachment A for more detail)
- approval of funding for a national public education campaign about the risks associated with cosmetic surgery and how to identify quality service providers
- initiation by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) of a review of assessment processes for facilities where cosmetic surgery is performed and the national standards required to deliver safe, high-quality cosmetic procedures
- progression by the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) to community consultation on:
 - a registration standard to support an ‘Area of Practice’ endorsement
 - higher professional standards, and
 - tougher advertising requirementsfor doctors who perform cosmetic surgery (see more at [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency - Consulting on the foundations of safer cosmetic surgery \(ahpra.gov.au\)](https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Consulting-on-the-foundations-of-safer-cosmetic-surgery))
- launch of the National Cosmetic Surgery Complaints Hotline (**1300 361 041**) for patients or practitioners who have concerns, and
- decision to continue the ban on the use of patient testimonials in health service advertising, including for cosmetic surgery.

Amendments to the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Regulation 2018*

Health Ministers made the following two Regulations—

- *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Amendment Regulation 2022* – this Regulation extends the jurisdiction of the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman to include oversight of external accreditation authorities and other entities performing accreditation functions under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and make minor amendments consequential to the amendments in the recently enacted *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2022 (Qld)*
- *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Amendment (Paramedicine Qualification) Regulation 2022* – this Regulation reflects an update to a qualification in paramedicine issued by the Ambulance Service of New South Wales.

The Regulations will commence after publication by the Victorian Government Printer and, for Western Australia, after publication in the Western Australia Gazette.

Medical professions that will be authorized to use the title ‘surgeon.’

Health Ministers have considered the feedback received from the Consultation RIS and from the Medical Board of Australia and agreed that new provisions under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law will be created to enable the Ministerial Council to approve, by administrative instrument, a class or classes of medical practitioners that may use the title ‘surgeon’.

Health Ministers have approved that only medical practitioners holding specialist registration in the following medical specialties should be permitted to use the title ‘surgeon’:

- surgery
- obstetrics and gynecology; and
- ophthalmology.

This decision does not affect surgical specialties in the dental and podiatry professions, including existing specialist titles *oral and maxillofacial surgeon*, *oral surgeon* and *podiatric surgeon*.

The legislation will establish powers to prosecute or take disciplinary action against persons who unlawfully take or use a protected title in relation to surgery or claim that they or another person hold a type of registration or endorsement in cosmetic surgery that they do not.