



Health and Disability Services  
Complaints Office (HaDSCO)



Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Health Practice  
Chinese Medicine  
Chiropractic  
Dental  
Medical  
Medical Radiation Practice  
Nursing and Midwifery  
Occupational Therapy  
Optometry  
Osteopathy  
Pharmacy  
Physiotherapy  
Podiatry  
Psychology

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

## How to make a complaint about a health, disability or mental health service, or a health practitioner

March 2019

Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO)

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

You can complain to either AHPRA or HaDSCO about a:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner
- Chinese medicine practitioner
- chiropractor
- dentist
- medical practitioner (doctor)
- midwife
- medical radiation practitioner
- nurse
- occupational therapist
- optometrist
- osteopath
- paramedic
- pharmacist
- physiotherapist
- podiatrist, or
- psychologist.

### What can the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency do?

AHPRA receives complaints about registered health practitioners for the relevant Board<sup>1</sup>. The Board registers health practitioners so they can practise their profession in Australia. *The Register of practitioners* is available at [www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registers-of-Practitioners](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registers-of-Practitioners).

The Board will act to protect the public if:

- a practitioner's behaviour is placing the public at risk
- a practitioner is practising their profession in an unsafe way, or
- a practitioner's ability to make safe judgments about their patients might be impaired because of their health.

The Board might need to gather more information before it can take action.

The Board can ensure that to keep practising, the practitioner must:

- work with a supervisor

<sup>1</sup> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Practice Board of Australia, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia, Chiropractic Board of Australia, Dental Board of Australia, Medical Board of Australia, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, Optometry Board of Australia, Osteopathy Board of Australia, Paramedicine Board of Australia, Pharmacy Board of Australia, Physiotherapy Board of Australia, Podiatry Board of Australia and Psychology Board of Australia.

- have further education, or
- do or not do something to keep the public safe.

The Board can decide to talk to HaDSCO about your complaint.

For very serious matters, the Board may refer the practitioner to the State Administrative Tribunal. The tribunal can suspend or cancel the practitioner's registration.

If you make a complaint to a Board, AHPRA will update you about what is happening and let you know the Board's final decision.

### What does the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office do?

HaDSCO manages complaints about health, disability and mental health services in Western Australia where service providers:

- refused to provide a service
- provided a service that should not have been provided
- provided a service in an unacceptable manner
- denied or restricted access to your medical records
- have not taken proper action on a complaint made to them
- breached confidentiality
- charged an excessive fee
- did not effectively deal with your complaint, or
- failed to comply with the Carer's Charter, Disability Service Standards or Mental Health Care Principles.

HaDSCO's role is to:

- work with you and the service provider to resolve your complaint, and help you to understand what has happened and why
- achieve an outcome, which may include an apology, explanation or refund, and
- if appropriate, make recommendations to the service provider to improve policies, procedures or practice.

HaDSCO's services are free, confidential and impartial.

If the practitioner is a registered health practitioner, HaDSCO must talk to AHPRA and the Board about your complaint to decide whether the Board or HaDSCO will manage all or part of your complaint.

More information is available at the HaDSCO website at [www.hadsco.wa.gov.au](http://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au).

You can make a complaint to HaDSCO about:

- health services:
  - hospital
  - medical/dental practice
  - 'allied health' service
  - ambulance service, or
  - pharmacy
- disability services, and
- mental health services.

### We can...

By working together, HaDSCO, AHPRA and the Boards can improve the quality and safety of health services.

If a Board believes there is a serious risk to public safety, it can restrict or remove a practitioner's right to practise.

### We can't...

- give you advice about your health
- tell a practitioner to give you medication or treatment
- tell a practitioner to give you your health records, or
- help you bring legal proceedings against anybody.

### **Have you contacted the health service or health practitioner directly?**

This is often the quickest way to resolve a complaint.

### **We invite you to contact us**

#### **AHPRA**

Level 1  
541 Hay Street  
Subiaco WA 6008  
GPO Box 9958  
Perth WA 6001  
1300 419 495  
[www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)

#### **Health and Disability Services Complaints Office**

6551 7600  
1800 813 583 free from landlines  
GPO Box B61  
Perth WA 6838  
[www.hadsco.wa.gov.au](http://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au)  
[mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au](mailto:mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au)

**National Relay Service** [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

#### **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)**

[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au) 131 450