



8 July 2016

A letter to all practitioners

Dear Practitioner,

I am writing to provide you with an update on the Council's latest decisions on the child and adolescent health project. The Council has decided that:

1. All practitioners will be required to undertake a *recertification programme in child and adolescent health;
2. Practitioners will have to complete the recertification programme over a transitional time period of 3 years from the date that the programme becomes available;
3. The recertification programme will not be onerous for practitioners;
4. The recertification programme will be available on line; and,
5. The recertification programme will cover areas outlined in table 1 below.

Why did Council make this decision?

In making this decision the Council considered its statutory responsibilities under section 3 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (HPCAA), noting that its principal purpose is that of public protection. Consideration was given to the implications of the [Capabilities of Paediatric Osteopaths](#) research undertaken in July 2015 together with the [feedback on the practitioner survey](#) in November 2015. Council also took legal advice on the most appropriate mechanism within the HPCAA to address the issues that had been identified.

Council also considered the contextual issues of child and adolescent health in New Zealand today, and the Government's multi-agency approach to improving child health. The Council also took into account the requirements identified in the [Vulnerable Children's Act](#) and the recent [Children's Workforce Core Competencies – Draft Framework](#) identified by the Children's Action Group. It noted its own obligation under section 118(d) to promote the competence of osteopaths in the context of increased government action to protect at risk children, and with reference to the important role that osteopaths have as primary health care providers to identify such children and facilitate intervention.

Given the context described above, together with what Council knows about the profession's knowledge of child and adolescent health, it would be remiss of Council not to address these issues.

What happens next?

Council will now make contact with educational providers to discuss the resourcing of a recertification programme. The provision will cover the areas identified in points one to five above. Once all of the relevant information has been obtained, the Council will give the profession details of the recertification programme.

Council will also work with the providers of the undergraduate programme at Unitec to incorporate the components on the recertification programme into the curriculum to ensure that all future graduates have the same level of knowledge that is expected of current members of the profession.



Council will investigate the availability of a post graduate diploma in child and adolescent health for those practitioners who may wish to obtain a vocational scope of practice.

We understand that change can be difficult and challenging for some people. Council has no desire to add increased stressors to practitioners. However, it cannot ignore the evidence before it, which identifies a risk to children and young people receiving osteopathic care. Council is approaching this subject from a desire to improve child and adolescent care in our country through a mechanism of improved practitioner competence.

Table one: Topics that are most likely to be required by most osteopaths for immediate up-skilling are:

- critical thinking
- case history-taking, information retrieval, tests and screening
- ethics in child health care
- basic health programme provisions in New Zealand health care
- child health systems and support networks
- mental health issues for children
- management of the health needs of the under one-year-olds across a wide spectrum of needs
- Māori paediatric health care issues
- adolescent health issues
- communication and interpersonal skills in an integrative health-care arena.

*Recertification programme (Section 41 HPCAA) - a programme that ensures practitioners are competent to practice within their scope of practice. Remember the osteopathic scope of practice describes practice from birth to old age.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Charnock

Registrar

