

HCSCC media release

Thursday 24 September 2009

Health Complaints Commissioner welcomes new powers to deal with bogus and unregistered health practitioners



On 24 September 2009 the Minister for Health released the government's response to the Social Development Committee Inquiry report into bogus, unregistered and deregistered health practitioners.

The Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner, Leena Sudano, today welcomed the SA government's decision to develop a Code of Practice and provide HCSCC with enforcement powers.

Ms Sudano said "an SA Code of Practice, modelled on the NSW Code, will give South Australians the same protection as people in New South Wales against sub standard practices by unregistered health practitioners." Ms Sudano continued "The Code of Practice will set clear standards that unregistered health practitioners will have to meet. If they don't meet these standards, people will be able to complain to HCSCC. HCSCC will be able to take action, including warning the public, if an unregistered practitioner doesn't comply with the Code."

Ms Sudano added "the Code of Practice minimum standards that unregistered health practitioners will have to meet include:

- only providing services within their training and competence
- providing evidence to back any claims they make about treatments
- having a clinical basis to diagnose and treat conditions
- encouraging people to let their GP know about any treatment being provided
- ensuring people know who to complain to if they are not happy about their treatment."

Ms Sudano said "There are many different unregistered health practitioners, such as naturopaths, acupuncturists and psychotherapists. While many do the right thing, setting common standards, similar to the standards that apply to registered health practitioners like doctors, nurses and chiropractors, will make it easier for people to know what to look for".

Ms Sudano concluded "I encourage people to use the HCSCC information sheet 'Unregistered service providers - what to expect and what to do if you have concerns about an unregistered practitioner' available at: http://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au/cgi-bin/wf.pl?pid=aG4fX&mode=cd&file=../html/documents//02_what's%20new until the new Code is available next year."

The NSW Code came into force in August 2008. Information about the NSW Code is available at http://www.hccc.nsw.gov.au/html/Code_Conctact_Unregistered_page.htm

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