



**Te Kaunihera
Rata o
Aotearoa**

Medical
Council of
New Zealand

Policy on doctors visiting New Zealand treating individuals or groups they are travelling or working with

Policy Statement

Doctors accompanying individuals or groups of people visiting New Zealand who will provide medical diagnosis, treatment or advice only to those individuals or groups, and who are not registered with the Medical Council will not be required to obtain registration and a practising certificate, so long as they restrict their practice to those individuals or groups for the duration of their visit.

If the visiting doctor holds registration with the Medical Council at the time of the visit, they will be required to obtain a practising certificate.

Rationale

1. Under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA) doctors practising medicine in New Zealand must be registered and hold current practising certificates. This is fundamental to protecting the health and safety of the New Zealand public.
2. An exception to this requirement can reasonably be made for doctors who accompany individuals or groups visiting New Zealand for a limited period, and where the doctor will be providing care solely to that individual or group.
3. Doctors accompanying visiting sports teams, or other individuals or groups, on a visit to New Zealand may not treat members of the New Zealand public. The New Zealand public is not, therefore, at risk.
4. The organisers of the visit will be expected to ensure the accompanying doctor is competent to treat the visitors and that the visitors are aware that the doctor is not registered in New Zealand.

Sections 7 and 8 HPCAA

5. This policy does not derogate from section 7 of the HPCAA relating to the practice of medicine by unregistered practitioners. Under that section an unqualified person may not claim to be a health practitioner.

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6. Under section 8 of the HPCAA, a doctor registered with the Council, must, while practising medicine in New Zealand, hold a current practising certificate.

Practice of medicine defined

7. The Council defines the practice of medicine as including any of the following:
- advertising, holding out to the public, or representing in any manner that one is authorised to practise medicine in New Zealand
 - signing any medical certificate required for statutory purposes, such as death and cremation certificates
 - prescribing medicines, the sale or supply of which is restricted by law to prescription by medical practitioners or designated prescribers
 - assessing, diagnosing, treating, reporting or giving advice in a medical capacity, using the knowledge, skills, attitudes and competence initially attained for the MB ChB degree (or equivalent) and built upon in postgraduate and continuing medical education (CME), wherever there could be an issue of public safety.

‘Practice’ in this context goes wider than clinical medicine to include teaching, research, medical or health management, in hospitals, clinics, general practices and community and institutional contexts, whether paid or voluntary.

Version control

| Date | Details |
|----------------|---|
| August 1999 | Approved by Council |
| September 2017 | Policy updated to include Definition of practice of medicine |
| January 2024 | Update approved by Registrar |
| January 2029 | Review required |
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| DM#301301 | Policy on doctors visiting New Zealand to treat individuals or groups they are travelling or working with |