Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa | Medical Council of New Zealand

PO Box 10509
The Terrace
Wellington 6143
New Zealand

+64 4 384 7635
0800 286 801
mcnz@mcnz.org.nz
mcnz.org.nz

Practising certificates

Have you, since your last practising certificate was issued, been affected by a mental or physical condition that has the capacity to affect your ability to practise.

If your answer is 'Yes', please send us full details of the condition, the duration of any treatment, name and contact details of your treating practitioner(s), and involvement of university/medical school/employer.

The information we need is:

- the actual diagnosis you have been given, with a brief history
- a brief outline of treatment and its efficacy, and relevant management, including what is in place to assist recovery, or to manage any chronic, progressive, or relapsing and remitting conditions
- how the condition has impacted on your practice. If there are potential future impacts, any plans to manage these would be relevant
- any potential risk for patients
- any professional advice you have had on your fitness to practise.

You can ask your treating doctor to provide a report to cover the above. There is provision on the practising certificate application form for you to give your consent to the Council's Health Manager to contact your treating practitioner(s) for further information. This may be delegated to one of Council's Health Case Managers.

Please send all relevant information to our confidential email address pchealth@mcnz.org.nz.

What if I am not sure whether I have to provide information about a condition I have?

You can speak to one of the Health Case Managers on 0800 286 801 about your specific situation, for example your scope of practice may be a relevant factor. You can talk to your treating doctor, who is also welcome to speak to one of our Health Case Managers.

We do not usually need information about:

- short-lived conditions which respond quickly to rest or treatment, and from which a full recovery is made
- medical problems that don't affect a doctor's ability to practise.

Why does the Council collect and hold personal health information about doctors?

The information we ask for is consistent with our statutory purpose. We need to know if a doctor has a condition (mental or physical) that affects, or could affect, their practice, and we need to know to what extent, if any, this impacts on their ability to practise.

Council respects doctors' rights as they relate to their personal health information. The Council follows the information privacy principles set down under the Health Information Privacy Code 2020 and the Privacy Act 2020. Some of the key ways in which this is done are:

- The Council has authorised a small standing committee, the Health Committee, to act for it and for the Registrar in the majority of these health matters, thus ensuring that information provided is available only to those who need to be involved in the decision making, and oversight of that decision making. This helps ensure confidentiality of personal information.
- Confidentiality is assisted by having the information managed within a small team with appropriate security around paper and electronic files.

The general process for managing health disclosures on practising certificates

Your information comes straight to the Health Team. While other Council staff may be able to see that a practising certificate application is 'on hold' to the Health Team, they have no other information as it is not necessary to their work.

All new disclosures are reviewed by a senior and experienced health case manager who, in consultation with the Health Manager, and if necessary the Health Committee Chairperson, determine what, if any, other information or advice is required to assure Council that the condition affecting the doctor is not affecting their practice in a way that could put patients at risk.

Who else at Council sees the information I provide?

A summary report of all health disclosures, which includes each doctor's name, the diagnosis given, and action taken, is provided to the Health Committee.

If a decision is made to provide the full disclosure to the Health Committee, you will be advised in advance of that happening.

How we manage conflicts of interest

Follow this link to a list of Council members. Those members who are also Health Committee members are Professor Ron Paterson (Chair), Dr Stephen Child, Dr Alexandra Muthu, and Professor Marie Bismark. Dr Kenneth Clark, Council Chair, is an ex-officio member of the Committee. If you have a conflict of interest with anyone, please let the Health Case Manager you are dealing with know, so they can ensure that member does not receive your health information.