

Board Announcement

Outcome of the Review of the Board's use of Scopes of Practice

Background

Section 11 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (HPCA) Act 2003 (the "Act") requires the Board to specify one or more scopes of practice. In September 2004, the Board prescribed five scopes (Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Intern Psychologist, and Trainee Psychologist). In the following three years the Board monitored both informal and informal feedback arising from this decision.

In 2007 an application to create a 'Counselling Psychologist' scope was received and a consultation process was undertaken and published. Further decision-making on the creation of any new scopes was placed on hold in light of the Board's decision in April 2008 to review its use of scopes alongside the Ministry of Health's review of the Act itself.

A major stakeholder consultation then took place through 2008, resulting in the release of a discussion paper articulating the principles and values that the Board would apply to any decision, and a summary of the various options being contemplated.

Decision

On 21 August 2009 the Board decided to retain scopes of practice as currently gazetted. This decision was made alongside an agreement that the Board will work to improve the meaning and use of scopes by the public, employers, and psychologists themselves. The Board will also consider how it might better support access to the vocational scopes.

Immediate Implications

The application for a 'Counselling Psychologist' scope will now be progressed by the Board. Any other applications received will undergo the same process of consultation and consideration, in accordance with the Board's previously published principles and guidelines.

The Future of Scopes

The Board will reconsider how scopes are working in the medium term, but probably not until significant experience has been acquired with the soon-to-be revised Act.

Dr Lois Surgenor
Board Chair