

# The Physiotherapists Registration Board of Tasmania



Newsletter December 2007

## Physiotherapists Registration Board of Tasmania

### Chairperson

Mr Paul Shinkfield (Physiotherapist)

### Members – Physiotherapists

Ms Margaret Archer  
Ms Janet Millner

### Members – Community

Mr Malcolm Upston  
Ms Simone Bingham

## Board Office Contact Details

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## Registration Fees

Registration fees for 2008 of \$150 are due and payable by 31 January 2008. Physiotherapists who do not register by this date will incur a late payment penalty of \$50 and run the risk of jeopardising their professional indemnity insurance cover.

The Board is registered as a BPay recipient to enable physiotherapists to pay their registration promptly over the internet or via telephone banking with their own bank.

BPay information is included on the registration renewal notice. Payment may also be made by cheque or money order through the post, or by cash in person at the Board office.

## Website



All application forms for registration as a physiotherapist in Tasmania are available from the Board's website. The website can also provide you with other information such as links to legislation and other States' registration boards.

[www.physioboard.tas.gov.au](http://www.physioboard.tas.gov.au)

## Professional Indemnity Insurance

All physiotherapists are required to have professional indemnity (PI) insurance at all times whilst they are practising in Tasmania. However there are a number of factors that you should consider to ensure that you have appropriate cover.

### Are you covered in all circumstances?

Physiotherapists who are covered by their employer's insurance and do not have personal cover should consider whether the employer's policy will provide professional indemnity insurance for all times they practise physiotherapy. For example, provision of professional advice or treatment to sporting teams, friends or relatives may not be covered by your employers insurance. In this case you would be in breach of the Board's requirements and may be exposing yourself to personal liability should an incident occur.

### What level?

The Board has for several years specified that all physiotherapists must have a minimum of \$1 million professional indemnity cover. However the Board expects that all physiotherapists will determine the level of cover that is appropriate to their practise, which may be many times higher than the minimum requirement.

### Run off cover and gaps

You should also consider whether your policy will provide adequate cover if you should cease practise, either at the end of your career or if taking a break from practise. Some policies have run off cover included, others require that you maintain insurance to maintain cover.

### Not practising in Tasmania

The Board is aware that physiotherapists who wish to retain their registration in Tasmania but are currently practising overseas may not be able to obtain PI insurance that has effect in Tasmania. The Board requires that physiotherapists advise the Board when they return to practise in Tasmania and provide evidence of their PI insurance at that time.

## Christmas/New Year office hours

The Board's office will close at 12 noon on Monday 24 December 2007 and will re-open on Wednesday 2 January 2008.

The members and staff of the Board wish you all a Merry Christmas, and a happy and prosperous New Year!

PTO

## Professional Boundaries

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A recent case in Victoria has highlighted the need for physiotherapists to be aware of the requirement to observe appropriate professional standards.

A physiotherapist was found guilty of unprofessional conduct in that the physiotherapist had formed an improper relationship with a patient. The Victorian Board reprimanded the physiotherapist concerned and suspended their registration for a period of four weeks.

The basis of the complaint was that the physiotherapist had formed and maintained a close personal relationship with a patient over a period of time while continuing to treat that patient. The Victorian Board noted in its determination that the physiotherapist concerned had not given proper regard to the Board's Code of Conduct. They noted that it is the practitioner's responsibility to recognise when an inappropriate relationship is developing and to cease treating the patient.

The Tasmanian Board also applies the standard that it is inappropriate for a physiotherapist to engage in a relationship with a current patient or to engage in such a relationship with a person who was a current patient at the time of the alleged conduct.

The appropriate professional relationship between a physiotherapist and a patient is one where the health of the patient is the primary concern. It is the responsibility of physiotherapists to ensure that they behave ethically at all times and maintain professional boundaries with their patients, their immediate family members, carers and significant others.

Further details are contained in the Boards Policy statement "*Professional Boundaries and Sexual Misconduct*" which is available from the Board website.

## Recency of Practice

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The *Physiotherapists Registration Act 1999* requires that the Board must not re-register a physiotherapist who has not actively practised physiotherapy in the previous five years. The Board has interpreted this requirement to mean that a physiotherapist must have practised for at least 1000 hours over that period. The practise of physiotherapy in this context includes teaching, leadership or management of physiotherapists.

Physiotherapists who are unable to meet this requirement may have their competency assessed by the Recency of Practice Committee to determine how they can demonstrate their competence to practice.

Physiotherapists who are intending to have a period of time where they will not be actively practising physiotherapy should consider what activities they should undertake that will assist them in retaining their competency and to ensure that their skills and knowledge remain current.

## Physiotherapists' Change of Address

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All physiotherapists are reminded that failure to notify the Board of a change of address is an offence under the Act and may result in a fine or your name being removed from the register.

Physiotherapists should also be aware that the contact (mailing) address given to the Board is included in the Register of Physiotherapists, which is a public document.

Please ensure an appropriate address is given to the Board as a mailing address.

## Traveling Physiotherapists

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Physiotherapists travelling interstate with sporting teams are reminded that they must register with interstate Boards to ensure that they are practising as a registered physiotherapist when they treat team members. Failure to register may affect your professional indemnity insurance. Most Boards now have arrangements to permit physiotherapists travelling with sporting teams to register at a reduced rate.

Similarly, physiotherapists travelling to Tasmania with sporting team or for training purposes must register with the Board. The Tasmanian Board does not charge a registration fee for physiotherapists visiting Tasmania with sporting teams or for lectures.

More details are available from the Board website.

## Making Declarations to the Board

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Physiotherapists are reminded that they must take care to ensure that all documents that they sign for the Board contain accurate information, e.g. when applying for re-registration, forms should be read carefully before signing. Section 62 of the *Physiotherapists Registration Act 1999* states:

### **62. Offences of dishonesty**

(1) A person must not make or produce, or cause to be made or produced, a false or misleading statement, either orally or in writing, in connection with –  
(a) an application, inquiry or investigation; or  
(b) an examination by an inspector under section 54.  
Penalty: Fine not exceeding 25 penalty units (\$3000).

The Board will prosecute physiotherapists who provide false information. A conviction under this Section in the Magistrates Court may have serious consequences.

A recorded conviction may have implications in many fields beyond the immediate impact of dealings with the Board and the payment of a fine.

