

# National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (Queensland)

Information for health care consumers

## Better consumer protection

Everyone has the right to expect appropriate and beneficial services from health practitioners.

Health care workers generally deliver services to improve the health of their clients, but sometimes a health care worker may operate outside the bounds of what is ethical or safe health care.

## What is the *National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (Queensland)*?

In early 2015, all Australian State and Territory government health ministers agreed to the terms of the *National Code of conduct for healthcare workers* (National Code) to help give greater protection to consumers for services provided by certain health care practitioners. In Queensland, the National Code will be recognised as the *National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (Queensland)* (Queensland Code).

## To which health care workers does the Queensland Code apply?

The Queensland Code applies to:

- unregistered health practitioners, and
- registered practitioners providing a service not related to their registration.

The Queensland Code does not apply to registered health practitioners who deliver a health service related to their registration under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS). The registration of health practitioners may be viewed at [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)

## When does the Queensland Code take effect?

The Queensland Code applies from **1 October 2015**.

## What is expected of health care workers under the Queensland Code?

Health care workers must:

1. Provide services in a safe and ethical manner.
2. Obtain consent from their clients.
3. Display appropriate conduct when giving treatment advice.
4. Report concerns about treatment or care provided by other health care workers.
5. Take appropriate action in response to adverse events.
6. Adopt standard precautions for infection control.
7. Practice safely if diagnosed with infectious medical conditions.
8. Not make claims to cure certain serious illnesses.
9. Not misinform their clients.
10. Not practice under the influence of alcohol or unlawful substances.
11. Modify or stop practicing if they have certain mental or physical impairments.
12. Not financially exploit clients.
13. Not engage in sexual misconduct.
14. Comply with relevant privacy laws.
15. Keep appropriate records.
16. Be covered by appropriate insurance.
17. Display code and other information (unless exempt).

## How can I make a complaint about the health care I have received?

If you are not satisfied with a health service provided by your health care worker, or you are concerned with the health, conduct, or performance of an unregistered or registered health practitioner, then you have the right to make a complaint.

Try talking with your health service provider in the first instance, as they may be able to resolve your concern or fix the problem. If you are not satisfied with the response, or feel uncomfortable talking with the provider directly, you can lodge a complaint with the Office of the Health Ombudsman, by:

- submitting an online complaint form at [www.oho.qld.gov.au](http://www.oho.qld.gov.au)
- filling in a complaint form (available at [www.oho.qld.gov.au](http://www.oho.qld.gov.au)) and
  - sending it to:  
PO Box 13281, George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4003
  - faxing it to (07) 3319 6350
  - emailing it to [complaints@oho.qld.gov.au](mailto:complaints@oho.qld.gov.au)
- making an appointment to speak to them by calling 133 OHO (646). They are open from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday.



Consumers requiring an interpreter can access the Office of the Health Ombudsman using the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) by calling 131 450.

Consumers with a hearing or speech impairment can access the Office of the Health Ombudsman using the National Relay Service:

- TTY/voice call – 133 677
- Speak and Listen – 1300 555 727
- SMS relay – 0423 677 767
- Website – [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

## What actions may be taken?

The Queensland Code will be a document to which the Health Ombudsman and Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal may refer when considering what actions to take in relation to a health care worker who has operated unethically or unsafely or has compromised someone's health. The Health Ombudsman already has powers to take action in relation to health care workers who are not registered. Once the Health Ombudsman has accepted a complaint, actions may include:

- assessing the complaint
- facilitating local resolution
- taking immediate action, including making an interim prohibition order
- investigating the matter
- undertaking conciliation
- referring to a government entity, such as the police service
- referring internally to the Director of Proceedings for a decision about whether to refer the complaint to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT)
- undertaking an inquiry into the matter of the complaint.

Further information may be found at

[www.oho.qld.gov.au](http://www.oho.qld.gov.au)

If a health care worker is prohibited to work in a health care role, there will be mutual recognition of these conditions between States and Territories. This means that an order issued in one State or Territory will be recognised across borders. Queensland currently recognises prohibition orders issued in New South Wales and South Australia, and this will expand as other States and Territories implement the National Code.

Consumers will be able to check a national website (under development) to see if a health care worker has a prohibition order recorded. Until the national site is established, prohibition orders can be found online at:

Queensland: [Office of the Health Ombudsman](http://www.oho.qld.gov.au)

Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal decisions at <http://www.qcat.qld.gov.au/qcat-decisions/published-decisions>

NSW: Health Care Complaints Commission at <http://www.hccc.nsw.gov.au/Hearings--decisions/Public-Statements-Warnings>

SA: Health and Community Services Complaints Commission at: <http://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au/orders-issued-code-conduct-unregistered-health-practitioners/>

## More information

To find out more about the Queensland Code, visit <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/national-code-of-conduct/>