



Health Professions Council of South Africa | eBulletin | 17 August 2022

Dear Valued Practitioner

The Health Committee is a non-punitive body that assists practitioners and registered students, who suffer from mental or physical challenges, or substance abuse as explained below. Practitioners are invited to engage the committee – especially in this time of uncertainty.

What is the Inter-Board Health Committee?

The Inter-Board Health Committee of the Health Professions Council of South Africa is the governance structure mandated to regulate and advise registered practitioners who may be suffering from mental and/or physical condition or the abuse of/ or dependence on chemical substances, which affects and impact the competence, attitude, judgment or performance of professional practice.

The committee is a non-punitive structure established to ensure that impaired practitioners are managed to ensure safety of practice in order to protect the public.

The role and functions of the Inter-Board Health Committee is to:

- Undertake informal assessments on all alleged impairment of students and practitioners, to make resolutions with regard to impairment and, if required, to impose conditions of registration or practice, propose treatment and rehabilitation programmes for the impaired practitioner.
- Undertake formal investigations on allegations of impairment in the absence of voluntary cooperation of students or practitioners, to make findings with regard to impairment and, if required, to impose conditions of registration or practice aimed at protection of patients and propose treatment and rehabilitation of impaired students or practitioners.
- Oversee the implementation of treatment programmes of impaired students or practitioners and to review the progress on an on-going basis.

Impaired practitioner

Impaired practitioner is defined as a condition which renders a practitioner incapable of practising a profession with reasonable skills and safety, condition such as mental or physical condition which affects the competence, attitude, judgement or performance of professional acts by a registered practitioner.

The role of registered practitioner in the impairment process

To protect the interests of patients by ensuring that self or fellow registered practitioner with alleged impairment is reported to the committee in order for them to receive appropriate assistance. All practitioners have an obligation to:

- Report impaired registered practitioner keeping with the ethical guidelines;
- Assist colleagues requiring supervision, where such is necessary;
- Assist fellow practitioners to provide safe and effective care;
- Support colleagues in identifying practitioners requiring help from the committee;
- Supporting the committee in its endeavours to rehabilitate and restore health and wellness of practitioners.

Reporting allegations of impairment

Anyone, a student, intern or member of public shall report impairment of student, intern or practitioner to the committee for investigation if he or she is convinced that such student, intern or practitioner is impaired. The practitioner may report his or her own impairment or suspected impairment if he/she is aware of his or her own impairment or has been publicly informed or has been seriously advised by a colleague to act appropriately to obtain help in view of an alleged or established impairment.

Confidentiality always matters

The committee processes maintain strict confidentiality. Registered practitioners (including students) who are dependent on substance, who have psychological, physical and cognitive disorders are encouraged to come forward. Colleagues and family members may also refer practitioners to the Health Committee for support.

Impairment versus suspension

Practitioners who are declared impaired may still be allowed to practise the profession, although the committee review each case based on its merit. Some impaired practitioners may be practising with scope or registration limitations. The committee's main concern is to ensure that the public receive healthcare services from registered practitioner who is able to provide safe and competent care. Impairment does not necessarily mean suspension from practising the professions.

More information

For more information on impairment please liaise with: BasaniM@hpcsa.co.za

All the best,

The Radiography and Clinical Technology Board



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