

Statement received from the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, July 2026

In recent years, Ahpra has focused on minimising distress for practitioners who have a complaint made about their health, including mental health and alcohol and substance misuse.

Ahpra is committed to making its processes more timely, empathetic and transparent for everyone involved.

Ahpra understands that practitioners with a serious health concern are often already taking steps to manage their health. Ahpra wants those practitioners to have a more active role in the process, to exercise some control over the outcome, and to demonstrate their commitment to managing their health.

Safe practice starts with practitioner wellbeing and Ahpra encourages practitioners to seek support when they need it. A well-managed health condition, including a substance use disorder, is today less likely to lead to a notification being made to Ahpra.

Ahpra's first responsibility is to protect the public, but where a practitioner has a health concern, Ahpra will support them to keep practising when it is safe to do so.

It is now much less likely for a National Board to suspend a practitioner with a health concern. The number of immediate action suspensions when the main concern was a health issue dropped from 373 in 2022 down to just 24 in 2024, a 94 per cent reduction.

Ahpra's focus is to work closely with the practitioner, their treating team and their workplace. Ahpra wants to support practitioners to manage their own health and make their own decisions about their registration where appropriate – including making undertakings to pause or surrender their registration while they focus on getting well.

It is important for practitioners to realise the threshold for making a mandatory notification is high. In the case of a substance use disorder, the law only requires a mandatory report by a treating practitioner if there is a substantial risk of harm to the public because of impairment or intoxication while practising.

More information about what to expect if you get a notification, including messages from other doctors who have been through it, and details of support services, [can be found on the Ahpra website](#).