

Statistics and supervision... the role of The Medical and Dental Professions Board

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The end of the year approaches and examinations loom large in the minds of our undergraduate and postgraduate students. Those examinations and the courses on which the assessments are based, are subject to the final approval of the HPCSA, under the auspices of That Board carries a significant responsibility to the public and to practitioners and it may then be pertinent to publish the guidelines under which this most influential body operates... supervising education and training, practice and service, ethics and legal process.

The following is an excerpt taken from the Bulletin of the Health Professions Council, 2017.

The Medical and Dental Professions Board registers practitioners falling under the professions medical, dental, medical science and clinical associates, ensuring effective communication with stakeholders. The Board also ensures compliance to standards of education and training and ethical conduct, while facilitating professional matters of decision making.

The Board consists of 45 members who are serving a five-year term from 2015 to 2020. Two clinical associates were co-opted to serve as members of the Board until the regulations were amended to include clinical associates as part of the composition of the Board.

- The following strategic goals have been defined for the term of the Board:
- To ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the Board.
- Regulating and guiding the profession.
- Protecting the public.
- Advisory and advocacy for the profession and stakeholder engagement.
- The Board developed a Vision and Mission statement for the Board as follows.

Vision

To provide quality and equitable healthcare through public protection, professional regulation and advocacy.

Mission

The mission of the Medical and Dental Professions Board is to:

- Ensure appropriate education and training standards.
- Regulate and ensure compliance for professional registration.
- Promote and regulate professional as well as ethical practice.

- Guide the relevant professions and to protect the public.
- Maintain and enhance the dignity and integrity of the health profession and professionals.
- Advocate for the promotion of the health of the population.
- Commit to improved stakeholder engagement.
- Advise Council and the Minister of Health in the development of strategic policy frameworks.

Values

The Board has committed to deliver on its mandate through:

- Expecting honesty and integrity from its members.
- Acting with respect, fairness and transparency to all.
- Regulating consistently and decisively.
- Functioning effectively and efficiently.
- Ensuring accountability for its actions.

A strategic plan has been developed which will reflect performance levels of the Board for the term until 2020, and will serve as a tool for planning for future activities and to assess the Board in terms of performance.

The Board included detailed statistics in their 2017/2018 Annual HPCSA report, data which may be relevant as the profession prepares to welcome newly qualified dental practitioners. In April 2018, the Council recorded:

1214 Oral Hygienists and 400 Oral Hygiene students.
732 Oral Therapists and 205 Oral Therapy students.
6433 Dentists and 1338 Dental students.
and just for contrast: 45,503 Medical practitioners and 13,024 Medical students.

The Board added 227 Dentists as new registrants in 2017/2018.

The Board is responsible for the registration of 138 different categories of Health Workers, a total at April 2018 of 16481 practitioners. That represents a reduction from the 2016/2017 total which was 19121. Specialist registrations also dropped from 597 in 2016/2017 to 448 in 2017/2018.

There is no doubt that the Board carries a considerable load... of concern is that it appears that the load is becoming lighter as the total number of registrations drops. It will then be with acclaim that the Dental Profession will welcome new Dental Registrants at the end of this year. Every best wish to all students!