



Te Kaunihera  
Rata o  
Aotearoa

**Medical  
Council of  
New Zealand**

26 March 2020

### **Recertification requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic**

We would like to thank you for the leadership and support you are providing to the profession in these extraordinary times we find ourselves in.

This is a follow up to the letter I sent to you on 20 March.

Council recognises that we need to be flexible in our approach around a range of issues. We understand that there is a lot of concern within colleges, recertification providers and members of the profession about the need to meet recertification requirements. Therefore Council has made some decisions related to this to provide clarity to you and to the profession.

### **Waiving recertification requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Throughout the course of the current COVID-19 pandemic, doctors are likely to have difficulties accessing the usual channels and methods to undertake learning and development activities to meet recertification requirements.

We recognise that there will be significantly reduced opportunities for continued medical education (CME) through forums, conferences, face-to-face training and/or study, or other such events that require people to congregate. Other activities, for example peer review and multi-source feedback, are also likely to be difficult and of less importance while urgent clinical work is clearly a priority.

We acknowledge that recertification programme providers also face the same restrictions as other businesses and organisations during this period and will likely be unable to carry out the usual functions, which includes carrying out audits on doctors' compliance with recertification requirements.

Council has therefore agreed, to **waive recertification requirements** for the next 11 months.

On 25 March Council formally resolved that:

1. All doctors currently enrolled in Bpac<sup>nz</sup>'s Inpractice programme or in an accredited college recertification programme are exempt from the programme requirements until **28 February 2021**
2. Any doctor applying for an annual practising certificate after 25 March 2020, who would ordinarily be required to enrol with Inpractice or in a college programme, does not need to enrol until **28 February 2021**.
3. Council audits for compliance with recertification programme requirements will stop until **28 February 2021**.

### **Importantly**

- Resolution (2) above applies only to doctors applying for a practising certificate **after 25 March 2020**. All other doctors must continue to remain enrolled in their respective recertification programmes.

- Council will not require doctors to 'catch-up' for any missed recertification activity over this period.
- Any current audits of doctors' compliance will be discontinued.
- Any current enforcement action underway against doctors for non-compliance will, on a case basis, be deferred or discontinued.
- Where a doctor has a condition on their scopes of practice that they must comply with recertification programme requirements and/or that they provide evidence of compliance, the condition will remain. However, auditing will cease until 2021.

Ahead of 28 February 2021, Council staff will work with Colleges and Inpractice on a strategy (and associated communications) to ensure swift resumption of the required recertification programme framework and Council's associated audit activity.

**Competence concerns**

Competence concerns about a doctor should continue to be notified to Council when appropriate to ensure maintenance of public safety. These concerns are generally raised outside of recertification processes, which are not designed to identify at-risk doctors, and therefore should continue as before.

Kia kaha

Joan Simeon

**Chief Executive**  
**Medical Council of New Zealand**