



OCNZ Newsletter December 2020

Dear fellow osteopaths,

On behalf of the Osteopathic Council we wish you all the very best for the festive season.

This has been a tumultuous year full of unique challenges, and we would like to again thank the profession for your efforts in continuing to maintain a high level of professionalism and commitment to patient care and support for each other over this time, despite the difficulties many have faced.

Although our responses to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic and the changes these required in clinical practice have resulted in some rapid adaptation in how we work, we have also been able gain some valuable learning from the experience. We have detailed some of the lessons we have learned later in this newsletter.

Alongside this response, the Council has continued to develop and review our processes and policies to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose. We have consulted on the development of our revised Continuing Competence programme, and you should see the results of this in the new year. We have also published both our standards and guidelines for telehealth practice (in response to the Level 3 and 4 lockdowns) and, importantly, a new Code of Conduct for osteopaths.

This year also saw us host our first fully virtual conference, which helped many practitioners join us remotely and without needing to travel. We saw an excellent turnout from the profession, and we are intending to hold our next conference in a similar manner next year – we will provide more details on this in the new year; however, we hope to see you all there!

We hope you will enjoy a well-deserved break over the summer and return refreshed for 2021.

Ngā mihi,

Tim Friedlander
Chair

Website Update

The Osteopathic Council of New Zealand is excited to announce that online registrations and the MyOsteo online portal are live and available to use on our homepage.

MyOsteo

MyOsteo will allow osteopaths to:

- renew their Annual Practising Certificate (APC)
- view APC status
- download their APC
- update their personal details eg. address changes
- view conditions in their scope of practice
- apply for an additional scope of practice
- change their practising status
- apply for a letter of good standing
- check their audit history.
- add CPD and keep track of CPD hours

To log into your portal visit our website or click the link below:

www.osteopathiccouncil.org.nz/MyOsteo

If you are logging into your portal for the first time you will need to enter your registration number in full (please do not add the hyphen e.g. 2200000) and click forgot my password to reset your password.

Online Registrations

Applicants can now apply for registration as an osteopath online. Applicants will need to create an account in [MyOsteo](#) and follow the correct registration pathway.

Covid-19

We have now had a chance to reflect on the events of 2020 when we found ourselves

living and working in a global pandemic. We wanted to share some of what we have learned and let you know about the changes we are making to improve our processes in the future.

In March 2020 the Covid-19 situation evolved extremely rapidly. At this time, community transmission of Covid-19 was occurring, and osteopathic clinics could have provided an environment to easily allow transmission.

The Ministry of Health directed changes to clinical practice regulations, which would normally take months, within days or sometimes hours. We were pleased with the responsiveness shown by osteopaths in complying with the lockdown practice restrictions and are in no doubt that lives and health were preserved as a result.

Level Four

We were happy to receive no notifications of osteopaths working outside of the Level 4 restrictions and were pleased to hear that many of you were adapting your practice to continue to provide care for your patients remotely.

Level Three

Level Three restrictions brought uncertainty and frustration for many of us. Ultimately the Ministry of Health decided to allow osteopaths to practice at Level 3 in extremely restricted circumstances.

Practitioners were required to use stringent infection prevention controls and patients needed to meet an extremely high threshold to be considered for treatment. Under these circumstances, the vast majority of practitioners elected not to provide in-person appointments, highlighting the seriousness with which osteopaths followed these guidelines. We recognise that the decision not to provide in-person appointments was extremely difficult in many cases and thank the profession.

The Ministry of Health requested that practitioners who did provide in-person appointments provide a summary of these interactions to the Registrar. Practitioners who had more than ten in-person interactions with patients were then requested to provide further information to determine if all the interactions met the extremely high threshold for treatment. An osteopath was then contracted to review this information. The reviewer reported back that no osteopath breached the Ministry of Health guidelines in respect of determining 'Urgent Care', and that no osteopath put public health at risk by treating during Level 3 due to the strict hygiene and pre-treatment screening that was put in place. Council then decided that no further action is warranted.

The Council will be looking at whether any further guidance is required in the event of further Ministry of Health directives. The responses received by osteopaths who practised during Level 3 will be considered in forming any guidance.

The Council recognises the considerable time and energy taken to provide such a report and would like to thank these osteopaths for their detailed and considered responses.

Communication with the profession

During the Covid lockdown our primary concern was sharing accurate information from the Ministry of Health with our registrants. We are currently working on improving our digital communication strategy so that we can reach every one of you to provide the correct information as quickly as possible in situations such as a pandemic, but also for day-to-day business.

Office resources

The events of 2020 highlighted to the OCNZ that although our Registrar and staff are highly skilled, we need to provide more resources to our support staff so that registrants who have questions can be provided with the right information as quickly as possible. We have committed to providing more resources in this direction.

Collaboration with Osteopaths NZ

Osteopaths NZ, as the professional association, lobbied the Ministry of Health and ACC on behalf of the profession when the time came for re-assessing practice restrictions. We were happy to provide any information required for these applications and build our positive working relationship.

Collaboration between professions

In many instances, the Ministry of Health grouped Allied Health providers together in terms of restricting practice during the Covid-19 lockdown. This gave us the opportunity to collaborate with other regulators in providing resources and information to our registrants. The relationships built during this period have been maintained and we look forward to further collaboration on other projects.

Feedback to the Ministry of Health

In some cases, the guidance provided by the Ministry of Health was clear but in other instances it was open to interpretation, leading to confusion and frustration from both practitioners and regulators across the healthcare sector. The MoH has been given feedback by OCNZ and other regulators regarding these concerns.

Ngā mihi

Lara Sanders
Deputy Chair

Child and Adolescent Health Recertification Programme

As you are aware the Council required osteopaths who were registered and holding a practising certificate to complete the Child and Adolescent programme by 31st December 2020.

The Council recognises that some osteopaths may have experienced some difficulties in completing this course, and some may have decided not to treat children and young people under 18 years of age.

At its meeting on 30 November 2020 the Council decided that it would embark on an information gathering exercise where those osteopaths who don't confirm completion by the next APC renewal date of 31 March 2021, will be contacted individually before any proposal to include the condition is made.

Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal Vacancies

The Ministry of Health are currently looking for osteopathic candidates to fill 4 vacancies on the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (HPDT). The HPDT has a website where decisions are recorded (www.hpdt.org.nz)

The HPDT hears and determines disciplinary proceedings brought against osteopaths and other health practitioners. The Tribunal comprises a chairperson, two deputy chairpersons and a panel comprising laypersons and health practitioners. All members of the Tribunal are appointed by the Minister of Health. When the Tribunal sits to hear and determine a charge it comprises five people:

- The Chairperson or one of the deputy chairpersons;
- A lay person appointed from the panel;
- Three health professionals appointed from the panel and who are professional peers of the health practitioner who is the subject of the hearing.

If you are interested in applying please email your C.V to appointments@health.govt.nz.

Holiday Break

The members of the Osteopathic Council and its staff would like to thank you for

your contribution this year and to wish you and your families a safe and happy holiday season.

Our office will be closed for the break from Tuesday 24 December 2020 and reopen on Tuesday 5 January 2021.

If you have any urgent inquires please contact the Registrar, Clare Prendergast by emailing Clare@osteopathiccouncil.org.nz.

Kaunihera Whakanao Uaiwi



osteopathiccouncil.org.nz



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