



24 June 2020

Kanny Oi
Senior Policy Adviser and Researcher
Medical Council of New Zealand
PO Box 10509
Wellington 6143
Email: kooi@mcnz.org.nz

Dear Kanny

Re: Medical Council of New Zealand statement on unprofessional behaviour: How it impacts patient safety and team-based care

About the New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists (NZSA)

The NZSA is a professional medical education society which represents over 650 anaesthetists in New Zealand. Our members include specialist anaesthetists in public and private practice, and trainee anaesthetists. Our key areas of work are advocacy, facilitating and promoting education, and strengthening networks of anaesthetists nationwide.

Overview

The NZSA welcomes the opportunity to submit on the above Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) statement. We believe this is a high quality, well worded document and believe that the proposed changes are appropriate. We fully support the overarching aim of this statement to strengthen the teamwork focus of medical practice as we increasingly move from 'doctor as apex of the medical system' to 'doctor as integral member of the team.'

Below are suggested changes and points for MCNZ to consider.

Key points

- We note that the Statement has not been reviewed for 10 years. It is arguable that the 10-year gap between reviews is too long and we would recommend this document is reviewed every five years.
- In the section on the causes of unprofessional behaviour, many factors are covered. We would recommend MCNZ also consider adding the cumulative effects of a complaints process or simply the ongoing moral injury of dealing with sick people in an under resourced system. The concept of moral injury originated from military combat personnel. Although clearly not quite the same in the healthcare environment, medical staff are constantly making judgements, decisions and providing advice that have an emotional cost. There are both at-risk factors including upbringing and protective factors including coping mechanisms. It may be useful to acknowledge the concept of moral injury, along with protective and risk factors in the document.



- In the section 'Organisational strategies to manage unprofessional behaviour' we recommend including 'fostering an environment of respect to help prevent unprofessional behaviour.' This could include the recognition of individuals who role model professionalism and team-based interdisciplinary care to deliver excellent patient outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We are happy to answer any questions on our submission if required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathryn Hagen", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr Kathryn Hagen
President