

Reporting health concerns about yourself to MCNZ

If a doctor is affected by a mental or physical condition that affects, or could affect, his or her ability to practise medicine safely, they will need to notify MCNZ of this.

MCNZ defines the “ability to perform the functions required to practise medicine” as being able to:

- make safe judgments
- demonstrate the level of skill and knowledge required for safe practice
- behave appropriately
- not risk infecting patients
- not act in ways that adversely impact on patient safety

That does not mean that each and every mental or physical condition suffered by a doctor will trigger the obligation to notify. Usually MCNZ does not need to be informed about short-term conditions which respond quickly to rest or treatment, and from which a full recovery is expected. Ultimately, the key question is whether the condition affects, or could affect, the doctor’s ability to practise medicine safely. MCNZ has listed the following examples of conditions which are likely to trigger the duty to notify:

- alcohol or drug dependence
- any impairment that occurs as a result of drug or alcohol abuse
- psychiatric problems
- temporary stress reaction
- infection with a transmissible disease
- medical conditions affecting motor skills or cognition

MCNZ’s guide on making health disclosures sets out the information which is required to be disclosed.

The guide can be found on the **MCNZ website: Health Practising Certificate disclosures.**

When making such disclosure, the doctor has a professional obligation to be open and honest with MCNZ.

MCNZ takes a non-judgmental approach to notifications. While the primary focus is on the safety of patients and people the doctor is in contact with, MCNZ’s Health Team will be mindful of the need to support the doctor’s rehabilitation. Possible outcomes of a health condition notification include that Council may ask the doctor to limit his or her practice in some way, agree to treatment or counselling, or agree to monitoring of his or her health or practice. It may also decide to take no further action.

If you have indemnity insurance and feel that you may need to self-report, notify your indemnifier as promptly as you can.

Contact Us

NZMII are here to help!

Contact us if you have any questions about your medical indemnity cover.

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