

17th July 2009

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme For The Health Professions

Dear Ministerial Council,

Re – Submission on the Exposure Draft of the Bill

I am a registered Psychologist. I currently work in a multi disciplinary team in paediatrics, we provide assessment, rehabilitation and support for children who are vision impaired or blind and their families. I have been working alongside Orthoptists for 6 approximately years. This submission is in support of Orthoptists prescribing glasses without requiring a referral.

Orthoptists are tertiary qualified allied health professionals. From what I have witnessed, they provide a critical service to the community. People who are suffering from vision loss can also be some of the most vulnerable in our community. The Exposure Draft of this Bill regarding restrictions on the prescription of optical appliances, restricts members of the community from accessing an Orthoptist outside the public health setting for glasses unless they have a referral.

Vision loss in Australia is caused by uncorrected refractive error, age related macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataract, diabetic retinopathy, etc. It is disturbing to know that half of vision impairment in Australia is due to uncorrected refractive error. There is also a high incidence of refractive error in children who have developmental delay, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, cortical vision impairment, etc.

Orthoptists have the knowledge and training to prescribe glasses and should be able to do so, without restrictions. This can only be seen as a benefit to the public by increasing access to eye care.

I hope the Ministerial Council reconsiders the current wording in the exposure draft to allow Orthoptists the right to prescribe glasses with no referral required.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Saime Dilek
Psychologist
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