



Guidelines for employers regarding the appointment of clinical observers

Purpose

The Medical Council of New Zealand (Council) recognises that unregistered doctors are given opportunities to familiarise themselves with the New Zealand health system through clinical observerships. The Council is not able to direct District Health Boards (DHBs) on the provision of observerships however, these guidelines are issued in response to DHBs' requests for guidance.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DHBs ensure:

- That clinical observers have been accepted to sit the NZREX Clinical or have passed the NZREX Clinical.
- That clinical observers are familiar with DHB protocols and adhere to the policies of the DHB providing the opportunity.
- That clinical observers wear a photo ID badge that designates them as being an observer and displays the duration of the observership.
- That clinical observers must not prescribe, treat or have anything to do with the treatment or investigation of patients.
- That clinical observers should not practise medicine in any situation.
- That the patient is informed of the observer's status.
- If sensitive personal issues are to be discussed/examined, patient permission for the observer to remain should be obtained first.
- That clinical observers should not be alone with patients in areas not visible by other staff members.
- That all observers are supervised by a named DHB staff member.
- Observers are attached to consultants who are responsible for their presence in clinical areas.
- That all clinical observers comply with statutes and regulations which relate to health information and in particular the following statutes and regulations:
 - (a) the Privacy Act 1993;
 - (b) the Health Information Privacy Code of Practice 1994;
 - (c) the Health Act 1956.

NOTE:

- DHBs are not required to provide an observer programme
- DHBs have the right to withhold the observer programme (where there is one in place), at any time, without giving any reason or explanation.



Guidelines for clinical observers

Purpose

The Medical Council of New Zealand (Council) recognises that unregistered doctors are given opportunities to familiarise themselves with the New Zealand health system as doctors.

Recommendation

It is recommended that clinical observers comply with all DHB requirements, which may include:

- Being familiar with DHB protocols and adhering to the policies of the DHB providing the opportunity.
- Wearing a photo ID badge which designates them as being an observer and displays the duration of the observership.
- Not prescribing, treating or having anything to do with the treatment or investigation of patients.
- Informing patients of their observer status.
- Not being alone with patients in areas not visible by other staff members.
- Being supervised by a named DHB staff member.
- Are attached to consultants who are responsible for their presence in clinical areas.
- Complying with statutes and regulations which relate to health information and in particular the following statutes and regulations:
 - (a) the Privacy Act 1993;
 - (b) the Health Information Privacy Code of Practice 1994;
 - (c) the Health Act 1956.

NOTE:

- DHBs are not required to provide observer programmes
- DHBs have the right to withhold the observer programme (where there is one in place), at any time, without giving any reason or explanation.

Approved at Council meeting:

April 2012