

Office of the Health Ombudsman

Performance report August 2020



Office of the
**HEALTH
OMBUDSMAN**

Listen. Respond. Resolve.

Office of the Health Ombudsman—Performance report August 2020

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For more information contact:

Office of the Health Ombudsman, PO Box 13281 George Street, Brisbane QLD 4003, email communications@oho.qld.gov.au.

An electronic version of this document is available at www.oho.qld.gov.au.

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Introduction

This document reports on our performance during August 2020.

The OHO is Queensland's health service complaints management agency. We are an independent statutory body and the one place all Queenslanders should go if they have a complaint about a health service provided to them or someone in their care, a health service provider or any aspect of a health service provided in Queensland.

The OHO's vision is 'safe, competent and ethical health services that are responsive to consumer complaints' The OHO is committed to ensuring that all decisions are well-informed, fair, impartial and timely. For transparency the OHO publishes monthly, quarterly and yearly reports about its performance.

Data in this report is correct as at 7 August 2020, but is subject to change.

Intake of complaints

Type of contacts

Type of contact	Number	Percentage
Complaint	782	73.84
Enquiry	236	22.29
Information	31	2.93
Yet to be classified	10	0.94
Total	1059	100.00

'Yet to be classified' includes contacts in which not enough information was provided for a determination to be reached—but further information is being sought, or matters that were not able to be finalised prior to the end of the reporting period. Contacts deemed 'yet to be classified' will be allocated as complaints or enquiries once additional information is received and registered as such in the next reporting period.

Type of complaints

Type of complaints	Number	Percentage
Health consumer complaint	706	90.28
Mandatory notification*	30	3.84
Voluntary notification*	45	5.75
Self-notification*	0	0.00
Referral from another agency	1	0.13
Total	782	100.00

*Notifications are matters raised by health service providers which do not otherwise meet the definition of a health consumer complaint as required under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Queensland)*.

Complaint decisions

On 1 March 2020, amendments were made to the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013* (the Act) enabling the office to 'Not accept' a complaint in situations where the Health Ombudsman is satisfied:

- the complaint would be more appropriately dealt with by a different person or organisation; or
- the complainant has not yet sought a resolution with the relevant health service provider and it is reasonable in the circumstances for the complainant to first do so.

As a result of these changes, the table "Accepted vs Not Accepted" has been replaced with the table "Decisions made" included below.

Cases previously categorised as "Not Accepted" are now reported under the category of "Accepted and no further action taken" and relate to the number of decisions to take no further action under s 44 of the Act. This change is to definition only, and no alterations have been made to how these cases are managed by the office.

Decision timeframes—within seven days

Decision made within seven days of receiving a complaint	Number	Percentage
Yes	750	94.94
No	40	5.06
Total	790	100.00

Decisions made

Number of decisions made	Number	Percentage
Accepted and further relevant action taken	490	62.03
Accepted and no further action taken*	132	16.71
Not accepted under s35A**	168	21.27
Total	790	100.00

*These decisions relate to matters in which the Health Ombudsman has decided to take no further action under section 44 of the Act. Prior to 1 March 2020, this category was reported as "Not Accepted".

**Matters may not be accepted under s35A of the Act where the matter would be more appropriately dealt with by an entity other than the health ombudsman or where the complainant has not yet sought a resolution with the health service provider.

An additional 30 matters were determined to fall outside the jurisdiction of the Act.

Accepted decision outcomes

Type of relevant action taken	Number	Percentage
Assessment	118	22.43
Local resolution	156	29.66
Conciliation	0	0.00
Investigation	3	0.57
Referral to Ahpra and the national boards	176	33.46
Referral to another entity	73	13.88
Referral to legal services	0	0.00
Total	526	100.00

Accepted decisions may result in multiple issues and/or practitioners being identified, each requiring its own action. The data in the above table includes all identified issues/practitioners requiring action that were identified in the accepted complaints where further relevant action was taken (noted in category 'Accepted and further relevant action taken' included the previous 'Decisions made' table).

Health service complaints profile

Main issues raised in complaints

Issue	Number	Percentage
Access	112	9.64
Code of conduct for healthcare workers	11	0.95
Communication/information	137	11.79
Consent	27	2.32
Discharge/transfer arrangements	14	1.20
Environment/management of facilities	66	5.68
Fees/cost	26	2.24
Grievance processes	36	3.10
<i>Health Ombudsman Act 2013 offence</i>	1	0.09
Medical records	37	3.18
Medication	110	9.47
Professional conduct	132	11.36
Professional health	26	2.24
Professional performance	396	34.08
Reports/certificates	31	2.67
Research/teaching/assessment	0	0.00
Total	1162	100.00

These figures are based on issues recorded during the reporting period. A single complaint can contain multiple issues. Reporting on all issues identified in complaints allows comprehensive monitoring of trends, which can in turn inform a range of health complaint management system functions, such as education and information provision.

Subcategories of professional performance issues raised in complaints

Issue	Number	Percentage
Competence	13	3.28
Coordination of treatment	41	10.35
Delay in treatment	17	4.29
Diagnosis	41	10.35
Inadequate care	33	8.33
Inadequate consultation	17	4.29
Inadequate prosthetic equipment	4	1.01
Inadequate treatment	87	21.97
Infection control	14	3.54
No or inappropriate referral	12	3.03
Public or private election	0	0.00
Rough and painful treatment	16	4.04
Teamwork and supervision	1	0.25
Unexpected treatment outcome or complications	82	20.71
Withdrawal of treatment	1	0.25
Wrong or inappropriate treatment	17	4.29
Total	396	100.00

Professional performance represents the largest proportion of complaint issues. Additional information on this category of issue provides greater transparency around the issues being managed by OHO. These figures are based on issues recorded during the reporting period. A single complaint can contain multiple issues. Reporting on all issues identified in complaints allows comprehensive monitoring of trends, which can in turn inform a range of health complaint management system functions, such as education and information provision.

Profile of complaints about health practitioners

Practitioner type	Number of practitioners identified in complaints*	Number and type of issues** identified in complaints about health practitioners																Total issues identified
		Access	Code of conduct for healthcare workers	Communication and information	Consent	Discharge/transfer arrangements	Environment/management of facility	Fees and costs	Grievance process	Health Ombudsman Act 2013 Offence	Medical records	Medication	Professional conduct	Professional health	Professional performance	Reports/certificates	Research/Teaching/Assessment	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Chinese medicine practitioner	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Chiropractor	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Dental practitioner	33	1	-	3	1	-	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	28	-	-	38
Medical practitioner	210	7	-	36	3	-	4	8	5	-	13	35	37	9	112	15	-	284
Medical radiation practitioner	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Midwife	5	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	5
Nurse	59	-	-	2	1	-	2	-	-	-	3	2	40	16	11	-	-	77
Occupational therapist	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	4	-	3	2	-	10
Optometrist	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Osteopath	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Paramedic	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	8
Pharmacist	7	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	8
Physiotherapist	3	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	5
Podiatrist	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Psychologist	15	1	-	5	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	6	-	3	1	-	17
Student practitioner	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	4
Unregistered practitioner	16	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	-	4	-	-	19
Unknown practitioner	20	1	-	5	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	6	-	5	2	-	24
Total	390	11	10	56	7	0	8	12	6	1	19	43	114	26	170	20	0	503

* The figures reported in this column are a count of the number of health practitioners identified in complaints during the reporting period. A single complaint may identify more than one health practitioner and/or health service organisation. In circumstances where a health practitioner is identified in relation to multiple complaints, the health practitioner would be counted per complaint. For example, a health practitioner identified in three complaints would be counted three times in this column.

** This data is a count of the number of issues identified within the reporting period. A complaint may also identify more than one issue per health practitioner.

Profile of complaints about health service organisations

Organisation type	Number of facilities identified in complaints*	Number and type of issues** identified in complaints about health service organisations																Total issues identified
		Access	Code of conduct for healthcare workers	Communication and information	Consent	Discharge/transfer arrangements	Environment/management of facility	Fees and costs	Grievance processes	Health Ombudsman Act 2013 Offence	Medical records	Medication	Professional conduct	Professional health	Professional performance	Reports/certificates	Research/Teaching/Assessment	
Administrative service	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Aged care facility	8	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	6	-	-	12
Allied health service	11	1	-	3	-	-	5	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	13
Ambulance service	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
Community health service	6	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	5	1	-	11
Correctional facility	104	64	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	31	-	-	12	-	-	111
Dental service	34	2	-	4	-	-	5	4	8	-	1	-	-	-	21	-	-	45
Health information service	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Health promotion service	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Hospital and Health Service	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Laboratory service	12	-	-	3	-	-	5	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	4	-	-	15
Licensed private hospital	23	2	-	3	1	3	4	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	11	3	-	31
Medical centre	43	9	-	8	-	-	5	1	1	-	6	4	4	-	8	2	-	48
Mental health service	39	1	-	11	7	1	4	-	2	-	1	4	-	-	14	-	-	45
Nursing service	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Optical Store	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Other government department	14	4	-	4	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	14
Other support service	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Paramedical service	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Pharmaceutical service	9	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	9
Private organisation	7	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	-	-	8
Public health service	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	-	-	6

Public hospital	184	15	-	37	10	10	16	2	12	-	6	15	9	-	128	3	-	263
Residential care service	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	3
Specialised health service	13	-	-	3	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	1	2	-	4	-	-	14
Licensed day hospital	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Welfare service	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Unknown organisation	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
Total	523	101	1	81	20	14	58	14	30	0	18	67	18	0	226	11	0	659

* The figures reported in this column are a count of the number of health service organisations identified in complaints during the reporting period. A single complaint may identify more than one health practitioner and/or health service organisation. In circumstances where a health service organisation is identified in relation to multiple complaints, the health service organisation would be counted per complaint. For example, a health service organisation identified in three complaints would be counted three times in this column.

** This data is a count of the number of issues identified within the reporting period. A complaint may also identify more than one issue per health service organisation.

Assessment

Assessments started and completed

Assessments this month	Number
Assessments started	137
Assessments completed	98

Completed assessment timeframes

Of the 98 assessments finalised in August, 93 were completed within 30 days or 60 days with an approved extension, representing a finalisation rate within statutory timeframes of 94.90 per cent.

Of the 43 assessments completed within 60 days, all were approved for extension.

Assessment timeframes	Number	Percentage
Completed within 30 days	50	51.02
Completed within 60 days*	43	43.88
Completed in more than 60 days	5	5.10
Total	98	100.00

*Assessments are able to be completed within 60 days when granted an extension of 30 days as a result of legislated requirements being met.

Assessment decisions

Type of relevant action	Number	Percentage
Local resolution	0	0.00
Conciliation	6	4.84
Investigation	5	4.03
Referred to Ahpra and the national boards	21	16.94
Referral to another entity	10	8.06
No further action	82	66.13
Total	124	100.00

Total assessment decisions will not equal the total number of assessments (in previous tables) as a single assessment can result in multiple relevant actions.

Local resolution

Local resolutions started and completed

Local resolutions this month	Number
Local resolutions started	158
Local resolutions completed	94

Completed local resolutions

Timeframes

Of the 94 local resolutions finalised in August, 90 were completed within 30 days or 60 days with an approved extension, representing a finalisation rate within statutory timeframes of 95.74 per cent.

Local resolution timeframes	Number	Percentage
Completed within 30 days	80	85.11
Completed within 60 days*	12	12.77
Completed in more than 60 days	2	2.13
Total	94	100.00

*Local resolutions are able to be completed within 60 days when granted an extension of 30 days as a result of legislated requirements being met. An extension may be granted in cases where either; an outcome could not be reached due to the time taken to obtain information under notice, or where resolution was not achieved in 30 days and there is a reasonable belief resolution may be achieved with an extension of time. In considering a request for extension, consideration must also be given to the actual management of the case; for example, in cases where the management of the case was delayed due to factors such as the Christmas closure period, an extension may not be approved.

Outcomes

Local resolution outcomes	Number	Percentage
Resolved	78	82.98
Not resolved	6	6.38
Complaint withdrawn*	7	7.45
Local resolution did not commence**	3	3.19
Total	94	100.00

*Complainants can choose to withdraw their complaint at any stage during local resolution.

**A local resolution may not commence where the complaint is resolved directly with the health care provider prior to the commencement of the process.

Decisions for matters that were not resolved

Type of relevant action	Number	Percentage
Assessment	0	0.00
Conciliation	0	0.00
Investigation	0	0.00
Referral to Ahpra and the national boards	0	0.00
Referral to another entity	1	16.67
No further action	5	83.33
Total	6	100.00

Conciliation

Conciliations started and closed

Conciliations this month	Number
Conciliations open at the start of the month	41
Conciliations started	5
Conciliations closed	2

The number of conciliations started in the reporting period may not match the number of decisions to refer for conciliation noted in other areas of the report due to the time between a decision being made and an action taken crossing over different reporting periods.

'Conciliations started' includes all matters—including matters where agreement to participate has or has not been reached or the decision is pending—that entered the conciliation workflow during the reporting period following the OHO assessing them as being suitable for conciliation. Similarly, 'conciliations closed' are all matters that were closed during the reporting period, whether due to parties not agreeing to participate or the matter being closed after completing the conciliation process. Closed conciliations differ from completed conciliations below, as completed conciliations only include matters where both parties agreed to participate and the conciliation process was completed.

Agreement to participate in conciliation

Agreement to participate in conciliation	Number
Parties agreed to conciliation	0
Party/ies did not agree to conciliation	2
Decision pending at end of month	15

Once the decision is made to attempt conciliation, both parties must agree to participate in the process. If either one, or both, of the parties do not agree, the conciliation process does not commence and the matter is closed.

'Decisions pending' includes matters where parties are still deciding whether to participate in conciliation at the end of the reporting period. It also includes matters that have been referred to another relevant action, where conciliation may not commence until this relevant action has been finalised.

Completed conciliations

Timeframes

Completed conciliation timeframes	Number	Percentage
Less than 3 months	0	0.00
3–6 months	0	0.00
6–9 months	0	0.00
9–12 months	0	0.00
More than 12 months	0	0.00
Total	0	0.00

The data above relates to matters where parties agreed to participate in conciliation and the conciliation process was completed within the specified timeframes. 'Completed conciliations' differ from 'closed conciliations'—in the table on page 16—as they only relate to matters where parties agreed to participate and the conciliation process was completed.

Outcomes

Conciliation outcomes	Number	Percentage
Successful	0	0.00
Not successful	0	0.00
Ended by Health Ombudsman	0	0.00
Total	0	0.000

The data above relates to matters where parties agreed to participate in conciliation. After agreeing, the conciliation process was completed with the matter either being successful or not successful—or in rare instances, the Health Ombudsman ending it. 'Completed conciliations' differ from 'closed conciliations'—in the table on page 16—in that they only relate to matters where parties agreed to participate and the conciliation process was completed.

Decisions for conciliations that were not successful

Type of relevant action	Number	Percentage
Local resolution	0	0.00
Investigation	0	0.00
Referral to Ahpra and the national boards	0	0.00
Referral to another entity	0	0.00
No further action	0	0.00
Total	0	0.00

Open conciliation timeframes

Open conciliation timeframes	Number	Percentage
Less than 3 months	22	50.00
3–6 months	5	11.36
6–9 months	5	11.36
9–12 months	5	11.36
More than 12 months	7	15.91
Total	44	100.00

Matters can be referred simultaneously to conciliation and another relevant action. Conciliation may not commence until after the other relevant action has been finalised. To allow for continued transparency in the timeliness of conciliation processes, open conciliation timeframes include the time in which a matter was on hold whilst another process was finalised.

There are 10 matters on hold until the outcome of another process is finalised (e.g. the process of another agency such as Ahpra). This includes 3 matters that have been open for less than 3 months, 2 that has been open for 3–6 months, 2 that have been open for 6 – 9 months, 0 that have been open for 9–12 months, and 3 that have been open for more than 12 months.

To allow for continued transparency in the timeliness of conciliation processes, open conciliation timeframes include the time in which a matter was on hold whilst another process was finalised.

Investigation

Investigations started and closed

Investigations this month	Number
Investigations open at the beginning of the month	135
Investigations started	14
Investigations closed	6
Investigations amalgamated under s40(2)*	0
Investigations separated under s40(2)**	0

* Matters that involve similar allegations against a health service provider may be combined and dealt with together under section 40(2) of the Act.

**The office may decide to separate an investigation in cases where, as the investigation progresses, it becomes apparent that the matter is not suitable to be dealt with together under s40(2) of the Act.

Closed investigations

Timeframes

Of the 6 investigations, 50 per cent were closed within twelve months of commencement.

Closed investigation timeframes	Number	Percentage
Less than 3 months	0	0.00
3–6 months	1	16.67
6–9 months	1	16.67
9–12 months	1	16.67
12–24 months	0	0.00
More than 2 years	3	50.00
Total	6	100.00

Investigation outcomes

Outcome	Number	Percentage
Recommended for referral to Director of Proceedings*	1	16.67
Recommended that the Health Ombudsman issue a Permanent Prohibition Order	3	50.00
Referred to Ahpra	0	0.00
Referred to another agency	0	0.00
No further action	2	33.33
Conciliation	0	0.00
Total	6	100.00

Total investigation outcomes may not equal the total number of investigations completed (in previous tables) as a single investigation may result in multiple outcomes. In certain circumstances it may also be appropriate for the office to take action prior to the investigation being completed. For example, a matter of criminal conduct identified in the course of an investigation being referred to the Queensland Police Service.

*Matters determined suitable for referral to the Director of Proceedings at the conclusion of an investigation are sent to the Health Ombudsman for consideration and determination on whether referral to the Director of Proceedings is appropriate.

Open investigations

Open investigations consist of two categories—active investigations and paused investigations.

Active investigations are being currently investigated by the office, while paused investigations are not able to be investigated by the office until such time as another agency—such as the Queensland Police Service or the Office of the State Coroner—concludes their own processes. Despite the office being unable to progress paused investigations, they are still considered to be open investigations.

Active investigation timeframes

Active investigation timeframes	Number	Percentage
Less than 3 months	25	23.15
3–6 months	22	20.37
6–9 months	14	12.96
9–12 months	15	13.89
12–24 months*	27	25.00
More than 2 years*	5	4.63
Total	108	100.00

* All investigations that have been open for more than 12 months are published on the investigations register on the OHO website.

Paused investigation timeframes

Paused investigation timeframes	Number	Percentage
Less than 3 months	0	0.00
3–6 months	5	14.29
6–9 months	9	25.71
9–12 months	3	8.57
12–24 months	11	31.43
More than 2 years	7	20.00
Total	35	100.00

Certain matters may be referred to an external agency, such as the Queensland Police Service while criminal proceedings take place, or to the coroner if it relates to reportable deaths (under section 92 of the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013*). As a result, investigation of these matters will be put on pause until the external agency finalises its processes.

Total open investigation timeframes

Total open investigation timeframes	Number	Percentage
Less than 3 months	25	17.48
3–6 months	27	18.88
6–9 months	23	16.08
9–12 months	18	12.59
12–24 months	38	26.57
More than 2 years	12	8.39
Total	143	100.00

Total open investigation categories

Type of investigation	Number
Health service complaint	92
Systemic issue	1
Ministerial directed investigation	0
Another matter	47
s105 matters	3
Total	143

Monitoring investigation recommendations

At the completion of certain investigations, the Health Ombudsman makes recommendations to health services for how they can improve service delivery and/or prevent the issues identified in the investigation from happening again. In these instances, the OHO puts in place a recommendation monitoring program to track the implementation of the recommendations.

OHO recommendations monitoring

Cases this month	Number
Cases open at the beginning of the month	1
Recommendations monitoring cases started	2
Recommendations monitoring cases closed	0

Open recommendations monitoring timeframes

Open case timeframes	Number	Percentage
Less than 6 months	2	66.67
6–12 months	0	0.00
More than 12 months	1	33.33
Total	3	100.00

Director of Proceedings

Matters referred to the Director of Proceedings by practitioner type

Practitioner type	Number	Percentage
Medical practitioner	2	100.00
Total	2	100.00

Matters currently with the Director of Proceedings by practitioner type

Practitioner type	Number	Percentage
Chinese medicine practitioner	1	2.56
Medical practitioner	29	74.36
Pharmacist	2	5.13
Psychologist	1	2.56
Registered nurse	6	15.38
Total	39¹	100.00

¹One additional matter was referred back to the Health Ombudsman in June, but was not recorded until August.

Outcomes of matters reviewed by Director of Proceedings

Matters filed in in the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Practitioner type	Number	Percentage
Medical practitioner	2	40.00
Registered nurse	3	60.00
Total	5	100.00

Matters to be referred back to the Health Ombudsman

Practitioner type	Number	Percentage
Medical practitioner	1	100.00
Total	1	100.00

Immediate action

The *Health Ombudsman Act 2013* allows for immediate action to be taken against a registered or unregistered health practitioner if the Health Ombudsman reasonably believes the practitioner poses a serious risk to the health and safety of the public, or it is otherwise in the public interest.

Show cause notices

In August, two show cause notices were issued to:

- one registered nurse
- One medical practitioner

As outlined in the Act, upon receipt of a show cause notice, a health service provider is invited to make a submission within a stated period of time. The Health Ombudsman will then consider the submission before deciding whether to take immediate action against the provider.

Immediate registration actions

Practitioner type	Number	Action taken	Reasons/s for taking action*	
			Public Interest	Serious Risk
Registered nurse	1	Suspension		✓

Interim prohibition orders

Practitioner type	Number	Action taken	Reasons/s for taking action	
			Public Interest	Serious Risk
Massage therapist	1	Restrictions		✓
Registered nurse	1	Prohibition		✓
Unregistered health educator	1	Restrictions		✓

*From July 2019 the reason/s for taking action included in this table have been updated to more accurately reflect the immediate action process. The Health Ombudsman has powers to issue interim prohibitions orders to unregistered practitioners and registered practitioners practicing outside their field of registration. An interim prohibition order can prohibit or restrict the practitioner from providing any health service, or a specific health service. The details for current prohibition orders can be found on the OHO website (www.oho.qld.gov.au) on the prohibition order register.

Monitoring practitioner compliance

When the Health Ombudsman takes immediate action against a health practitioner, the office monitors the practitioner's compliance with the conditions of the order.

For interim prohibition orders, this means monitoring compliance with the restriction(s) on or prohibition of service. For immediate registration actions, this means monitoring compliance with condition(s) on or suspension of a practitioner's registration.

The Health Ombudsman may take immediate action against a single practitioner with both immediate registration action and an interim prohibition order. This can occur, for example, in instances where there is a risk that a registered practitioner may also practice in an unregistered capacity.

Practitioner monitoring cases

Cases this month	Number
Cases open at the beginning of the month	141
Practitioner monitoring cases started	4
Practitioner monitoring cases closed	1

Open monitoring cases

Timeframes

Open case timeframes	Number	Percentage
Less than 6 months	38	26.39
6–12 months	30	20.83
More than 12 months	76	52.78
Total	144	100.00

Immediate action types

Open cases by immediate action type	Number	Percentage
Interim prohibition order – restrictions	19	13.19
Interim prohibition order – prohibited	36	25.00
Immediate registration action - conditions	46	31.94
Immediate registration action - suspension	23	15.97
QCAT disciplinary decision	17	11.81

Open cases by immediate action type	Number	Percentage
QCAT interim decision	1	0.69
Permanent prohibition order	2	1.39
Total	144	100.00

Registered practitioners being monitored by practitioner type

Open cases by practitioner type	Number	Percentage
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker	0	0.00
Chinese medicine practitioner	3	4.05
Chiropractor	0	0.00
Dental practitioner	4	5.41
Medical practitioner	34	45.95
Medical radiation practitioner	0	0.00
Nursing and midwifery practitioner	24	32.43
Occupational therapist	0	0.00
Optometrist	0	0.00
Osteopath	1	1.35
Paramedic	2	2.70
Pharmacist	0	0.00
Physiotherapist	4	5.41
Podiatrist	0	0.00
Psychologist	2	2.70
Total	74	100.00

These figures are based on the number of individual registered practitioners being monitored by the OHO during the reporting period. As a single practitioner may be monitored in relation to more than one immediate action, these figures may not match the total number of open monitoring cases.

Unregistered practitioners being monitored by type

Open cases by practitioner type	Number	Percentage
Aboriginal and Torres strait islander health worker	1	1.56
Aged care health worker	6	9.38
Assistant in nursing	7	10.94
Cosmetic therapist	1	1.56
Counsellor	2	3.13
Disability support worker	2	3.13
Former registered health practitioner	10	15.63
Health educator	1	1.56
Health support worker	1	1.56
Holding out*	4	6.24
Kinesiologist	2	3.13
Massage therapist	16	25.00
Medical assistant	2	3.13
Natural therapist	1	1.56
Naturopath	1	1.56
Personal carer	1	1.56
Social worker	1	1.56
Student practitioner	1	1.56
Unregistered paramedic**	4	6.25
Total	64	100.00

*The titles of certain registered health professions are protected under the National Law. Anyone who uses a protected title (e.g. doctor), without being registered for that profession, are classified as 'holding out'.

**In November 2018 paramedicine became a regulated profession under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The practitioners listed in this table were working as paramedics prior to the regulation of the profession and are therefore listed as unregistered.

These figures are based on the number of individual unregistered practitioners being monitored by the OHO during the reporting period. As a single practitioner may be monitored in relation to more than one immediate action, these figures may not match the total number of open monitoring cases.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Consultation on matters

The office consults with Ahpra on matters that are considered to be appropriate for Ahpra to manage. For matters that we are considering referring to Ahpra under section 91 of the Act, we provide Ahpra with all necessary information in order for Ahpra to form a view as to whether they need to discuss or accept and progress the referral.

Consultation matters	Number
Matters consulted on*	232
Matters referred	235
Matters retained by the office**	4
Decision pending	19

*The number of matters consulted on may not equal the total number of matters referred, withdrawn and pending as a matter may have commenced consultation prior to the start of the reporting period.

**Under certain circumstances additional information may be received in the course of consultation resulting in the office retaining carriage of the matter and/or taking other relevant action.

Relevant action proposing referral

Relevant action	Number	Percentage
Intake and triage	198	85.34
Assessment	31	13.36
Conciliation	0	0.00
Local resolution	3	1.29
Internal review	0	0.00
Investigations	0	0.00
Director of Proceedings	0	0.00
Total	232	100.00

Age of matters on commencement of consultation

In order to prevent duplication of work, we aim to ensure that matters are referred to Ahpra as early as possible in the complaint management process.

Due to the type of matters for which investigation or conciliation is deemed appropriate, and the more time intensive nature of these processes, these matters are usually older when consultation commences.

Relevant action	0–7 days	8–14 days	15–30 days	31–60 days	More than 60 days
Intake and triage	194	4	0	0	0
Assessment	0	3	10	8	10
Local resolution	0	0	0	3	0
Conciliation	0	0	0	0	0
Internal review	0	0	0	0	0
Investigation	0	0	0	0	0
Director of Proceedings	0	0	0	0	0
Total	194	7	10	11	10

'Age of matters' is calculated from the date on which a matter was accepted by the office.

Consultation duration

Consultation duration	Number	Percentage
0–3 days	194	83.62
4–7 days	32	13.79
8–11 days	6	2.59
More than 12 days	0	0.00
Total	232	100.00

Number of practitioners referred to Ahpra by practitioner type

Practitioner type	Number	Percentage
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner	0	0.00
Chinese medicine practitioner	0	0.00
Chiropractor	0	0.00
Dental practitioner	23	9.79
Medical practitioner	129	54.89
Medical radiation practitioner	0	0.00
Nursing and midwifery practitioner	53	22.55
Occupational therapist	4	1.70
Optometrist	0	0.00
Osteopath	0	0.00
Paramedic	7	2.98
Pharmacist	5	2.13
Physiotherapist	1	0.43
Podiatrist	1	0.43
Psychologist	10	4.26
Student practitioner	2	0.85
Total	235	100.00

Number of issues referred to Ahpra by practitioner type

Registered practitioner type	Access	Communication and information	Consent	Discharge/ transfer arrangements	Environment/ management of facility	Fees and costs	Grievance process	Medical records	Medication	Professional conduct	Professional health	Professional performance	Reports/ certificates	Total
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Chinese medicine practitioner	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Chiropractor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Dental practitioner	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	2	-	24	-	30
Medical practitioner	-	15	2	-	1	3	2	7	17	26	8	95	11	187
Medical radiation practitioner	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Nursing and midwifery practitioner	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	3	3	37	14	11	-	72
Occupational therapist	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	5
Optometrist	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Osteopath	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Paramedic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	6	-	1	-	8
Pharmacist	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	1	-	8
Physiotherapist	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Podiatrist	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Psychologist	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	4	1	14
Student practitioner	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
Total	0	28	5	0	1	4	3	14	24	76	24	138	12	329

The figures above represent the number of issues referred to AHPRA, not the number of practitioners. The referral of a single practitioner may include multiple issues relating to that practitioner, with each issue requiring its own action.

Demographics of healthcare consumers

Gender of healthcare consumers

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	382	50.20
Male	339	44.55
Prefer not to specify	23	3.02
Unknown*	17	2.23
Total	761	100.00

*Not recorded or not provided for a particular matter.

Age of healthcare consumers

Age	Number	Percentage
Less than 18 years	51	6.70
18–24 years	39	5.12
25–34 years	124	16.29
35–44 years	151	19.84
45–54 years	116	15.24
55–64 years	86	11.30
65–74 years	63	8.28
More than 75 years	52	6.83
Unknown*	79	10.38
Total	761	100.00

*Not recorded or not provided for a particular matter.

Location of healthcare consumers

Location of healthcare consumers	Number	Percentage
Brisbane	302	39.68
Central West	0	0.00
Darling Downs	37	4.86
Far North	29	3.81
Fitzroy	35	4.60
Gold Coast	78	10.25
Mackay	18	2.37
North West	4	0.53
Northern	32	4.20
South West	3	0.39
Sunshine Coast	43	5.65
West Moreton	20	2.63
Wide Bay–Burnett	45	5.91
Outside Queensland	21	2.76
Unknown*	94	12.35
Total	761	100.00

*Not recorded or not provided for a particular matter.

Location of health service providers

Location of health service providers	Number	Percentage
Brisbane	405	45.71
Central West	1	0.11
Darling Downs	36	4.06
Far North	37	4.18
Fitzroy	34	3.84
Gold Coast	77	8.69
Mackay	22	2.48
North West	2	0.23
Northern	32	3.61
South West	3	0.34
Sunshine Coast	49	5.53
West Moreton	13	1.47
Wide Bay-Burnett	39	4.40
Outside Queensland*	10	1.13
Unknown**	126	14.22
Total	886	100.00

*Health service provider location is taken from the primary address of the provider recorded in the OHO complaints management system. Complaints can be made about health service providers from other states who have provided health services in Queensland. This could include locums travelling to Queensland from interstate or providers who previously lived in Queensland providing services but have since moved interstate—as the OHO can deal with complaints up to two years old.

**Not recorded or not provided for a particular matter.



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