



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

NEWSLETTER

August 2011

APC Renewals from 2012

We are currently improving our website facilities and work is underway to allow for you to apply for your APC online via the Council website. We expect this will be up and running in time for the renewals of APCs for the 2012-2013 year.

So, from January 2012 all APC applications will be managed through this online facility. Paper-copy applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

You will be informed of how to manage an online application once we have finished building and testing the new function. We expect to be able to do this within the next couple of months.

Renewing your APC online will have an impact on the way you pay your APC fee. Presently the Council allows for medical laboratory science practitioners APC renewal fees to be paid through their employing laboratory.

From January 2012 the APC bulk payment option from employers will no longer be available. When applying to renew your APC online you will be given a number of payment options, all of which require the individual practitioner to pay their own APC fee.

We understand that this is very different to what has happened in the past and therefore want to give you plenty of forewarning so that you can plan for this.

The online system will allow you to download a tax receipt as soon as your application and payment has been processed. This will allow you to seek prompt reimbursement from your employer (if you are eligible to do so). **Further updates will follow over the next few months**

We Have a New Name!

From 1st August 2011 the Medical Laboratory Science Board will be known as the **Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand**. This change in name came about following a decision to accept responsibility for the regulation of the profession of Anaesthetic Technology. In response to feedback from practitioners in the both the Medical Laboratory Science profession and the Anaesthetic Technology profession, it was agreed that the title *Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand* would better reflect the current professions for which the Council would be responsible for regulating as well as allow for the Council to accept regulatory responsibility for other relevant groups of health professions seeking registration under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

It will take us a while to get everything changed over into the new name (such as changing the logo and domain name for the website and getting new APC cards printed) so please bear with us during this time of transition.

Our primary role is to protect the health and wellbeing of the public in respect of the health professions we are responsible for regulating

Keeping the Board Informed

It is important for you to remember that as a registered health practitioner you have certain responsibilities. One of these is that you ensure the Council has your current contact details. While you are asked to update the Board of these every year when you apply to renew your APC, should any of your contact details change outside of that time, you must inform the Council immediately.

Please note your contact details must also include your current email address (if you have one). If you change your email address and don't tell us, you will not be able to access your online login as this is based on your current email address and can only be changed through the Council office.

Keeping Safe in the Laboratory Environment

The Council has been informed of a recent study of 341 medical laboratory staff that indicated medical laboratory workers are more likely to develop a condition called Raynaud's phenomenon if exposed to solvents such as toluene or xylene. Raynaud's phenomenon is vasoconstriction, or the narrowing of blood vessels in the hands and other extremities, and is characterised by pain, colour changes and tautness of the fingers or toes.

One of the study's authors, Gordon Purdie (University of Otago, Wellington), stated *"I am concerned that 75% of those who worked with xylene or toluene handled wet sample slides without gloves. The majority had done so daily for over a decade. Absorption through the skin is a classic way for solvents to have a negative impact on health"*.

Council would like to remind all practising medical laboratory scientists and technicians of their responsibilities in meeting health and safety standards in the laboratory. The Code of Competencies and Standards required for the Practice of Medical Laboratory Science clearly states practitioner's responsibilities to ensure their practice is safe (Competency 3). A copy of the Code can be downloaded from the Council's website at www.mlsboard.org.nz

Notifications

Over the last 15 months Council has received a number of notifications raising concerns about individual practitioner's practice and/or advice of a criminal conviction. A total of 19 notifications have been received. Three of these related to concerns that a practitioner may be unable to perform the activities required as a registered scientist or technician due to a physical and/or a mental health condition. Eleven notifications related to concerns about practitioner's competence to practise their scope of practice, and the remaining five notifications were related to conduct issues of practitioners. Two of these conduct notifications have been referred to a Professional Conduct Committee and further information is currently being sought for the remaining three.

Council has a Professional Standards Committee who works with secretariat staff to manage all notifications.

An information booklet covering the "why – what – how – where – when" of the various categories of notifications is to be developed later this year. This will be available as an information resource for all medical laboratory science practitioners. We will keep you posted with the progress of this project via the News section on the Council's website.

In the meantime if you have any thoughts on the information that should be included in this information booklet, we'd love to hear from you. You can email Jenny Lee at jenny.lee@medsci.co.nz

Regulation of Anaesthetic Technicians

From 1 April 2012 Council will also be responsible for the regulation of Anaesthetic Technicians and a Council-appointed Anaesthetic Technicians Advisory Committee has been working very hard over the last few months to develop the framework in readiness for this.

A consultation process with the anaesthetic technology profession and other interested stakeholders has been undertaken. Council will be considering the consultation submissions early this month and will then make a decision in respect of its policies and processes for the regulation of these health practitioners.

Please Activate "My Profile"

A few weeks ago all medical laboratory scientists and technicians who hold a current APC were sent a user name and password to allow you to access the "My Profile" portal on the Council website.

To date only 641 practitioners have done this.

You need to activate your "My Profile" now! This is your gateway to accessing all applications (including your APC). Becoming confident and knowledgeable in accessing the website in preparation for that is vital.

So the next time you get a few minutes to spare, log on and familiarise yourself with the layout and workings of "My Profile" – click on the "My Profile" button at the top right-hand corner of the screen