



**Podiatrists Board
of New Zealand**

Principles & Standards for the Practice of Podiatry in New Zealand (PSPPNZ)

April 2019

Principles & Standards for the Practice of Podiatry in New Zealand		Page 1 of 14
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PURPOSE

The Podiatrists Board of New Zealand is required by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 to set standards of clinical competence, cultural competence and ethical conduct for podiatry health practitioners for registration and recertification.¹ The Principles and Standards of Practice play an important role in the delivery of best practice podiatry to patients and it is important to understand the place of these principles and standards in everyday clinical practice.

Firstly, podiatrists must practice within New Zealand law and acknowledge the partnership with tangata whenua as established by the Treaty of Waitangi.

Podiatrists must work within the podiatry scope of practice as gazetted by the Board and abide by the Board's [Ethical Codes and Standards of Conduct](#).

Podiatrists must work within the legal framework that impacts upon the practice of health care in New Zealand. In the case of a complaint or legal action against a podiatrist, the Health and Disability Commissioner or the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal may refer to these Principles and Standards of Practice to establish whether the podiatrist concerned was practicing to the level expected by the profession.

The purpose of these Principles and Standards is to cover the profession's expectations of all practicing podiatrists. Effort has been made to ensure the criteria chosen and the guidance given remains in keeping with current best practice podiatry.

These Principles and Standards of Practice support the Board's Ethical Codes and Standards of Conduct and provide the basis for podiatry practice in all settings.

Podiatry is a constantly evolving profession and there is ongoing change in the health and social sector with a continual drive towards excellence and consistency in clinical practice.

The term 'patient' has been used throughout this document but is synonymous with 'client/consumer' which may be the preferred term in some podiatry settings.

Patients have the right to:

- have services provided with care and skill;
- have services provided that comply with legal, professional, ethical, and other relevant standards;
- have services provided in a manner consistent with their needs;
- have services provided in a manner that minimises the potential harm to, and optimises the quality of life of, that consumer;
- co-operation among providers to ensure quality and continuity of services.²

¹ Section 118(i) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

² Right 4 of the Code of Health and Disability Service Consumers' Rights.

The Professional Principles and Standards Framework describes the minimum standards of ethical conduct, and clinical and cultural competence that patients and the public can expect from podiatry health practitioners.

PRINCIPLES

There are five professional principles registered podiatrists must adhere to at all times. The principles all have equal importance and are not listed in any order of priority;

- 1. Patient centered care**
- 2. Safe practice**
- 3. Effective communication**
- 4. Quality care**
- 5. Integrity and professionalism**

COMPLIANCE

All registered podiatrists are required to meet the Board's Principles, Professional Standards and Practice Standards and adhere to the Ethical Principles.

Failure to meet the standards and adhere to the Professional Principles and Standards Framework could result in the Board's involvement and may impact on the practitioner's practice.

The Professional Principles and Standards Framework also provides guidance for the Courts, Health and Disability Commissioner, Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal and the Podiatrists Board when a practitioner's conduct, competence or fitness to practice is brought into question.

STANDARDS

Standards are what practitioners must keep to ensure they achieve the Principles.

- A Professional Standard may relate to a number of Principles, or is aligned to the Principle it most strongly relates to.
- Guidance is provided to help practitioners meet the Professional Standards.

PRACTICE STANDARDS

Practice Standards relate to specific areas of practice that require more detailed standards to enable practitioners to meet the Professional Standards and Ethical Principles.

The Practice Standards are relevant to various Professional Standards and Ethical Principles.

Podiatrists Board Practice Standards are:

- [Advertising](#)
- [Podiatry competency standards for Australia and New Zealand \(ANZPAC\)](#)
- [Infection prevention and control \(HRANZ\)](#)
- [Cultural competence](#)
- Informed consent
- Patient information and records
- Professional relationships
- [Transmissible major viral infections \(HRANZ\)](#)

STANDARDS FRAMEWORK FOR PODIATRISTS

Collectively, the principles, professional standards and practice standards form the Standards Framework, and define the standards of ethical conduct, clinical and cultural competence that all registered podiatrists must meet.

1. PRINCIPLE Patient centred care

Standards

- 1 You must ensure the health needs and safe care of your patients are your primary concerns
 - 2 You must put the interests of your patients ahead of personal, financial or other gain
 - 3 You must treat patients with dignity and respect at all times
 - 4 You must treat patients fairly and without discrimination, respecting cultural values, personal disabilities and individual differences
 - 5 You must respect the autonomy and freedom of choice of the patient
 - 6 You must respect patients' right to complain and enable them to seek redress
 - 7 You must protect the confidentiality of patient information
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1 ***You must ensure the health needs and safe care of your patients are your primary concerns***

Guidance

- Consider the complete health needs of your patient and recognise the patient's overall health needs may take precedence over podiatry health needs.
- Care for your patients in a consistently safe and competent manner.
- Recognise the value of an intra- and inter-professional approach to care when considering the complete health needs of your patients.

2 ***You must put the interests of your patients ahead of personal, financial or other gain***

- Your financial or personal interests should not drive or influence the management options presented to patients.

3 ***You must treat patients with dignity and respect at all times***

Guidance

- Be open and honest, courteous, empathetic and supportive in all your interactions with patients. Be sensitive to patients' preferences, needs and values.

4 ***You must treat patients fairly and without discrimination, respecting cultural values, personal disabilities and individual differences***

Guidance

- Do not discriminate against patients by reason of gender, marital status, religious or ethical belief, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, political opinion, employment status, family status or sexual orientation; or because of your own political, religious or moral beliefs.
- "Cultural values" are the beliefs common to a particular group of people, culture is not confined to ethnic origin.
- Be aware of cultural diversity when treating people of all cultural backgrounds and treat patients in a culturally responsive manner.

- Recognise the unique place Māori hold as tangata whenua in New Zealand and honour the Treaty of Waitangi principles of partnership, participation and protection in the delivery and promotion of podiatry.

5 ***You must respect the autonomy and freedom of choice of the patient***

Guidance

- Patients have the right to make their own decisions about their own health. Ensure your patients are fully informed of their health condition and proposed plan for care, so they can make decisions in their best interests.
- Respect patients' freedom of choice to choose an absence of intervention or to seek a second opinion. Respect patients' right to have a support person present.

6 ***You must respect patients' right to complain and enable them to seek redress***

Guidance

- Facilitate the fair, simple, speedy and efficient resolution of complaints. Inform the patient of any relevant internal or external complaints procedures.
- Ensure patients are aware of the [Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights](#).

7 ***You must protect the confidentiality of patient information***

Guidance

- [Privacy Act](#)
- Treat all patient information as confidential.
- Protect patient records so information is not revealed to unauthorised staff, patients or members of the public.
- If you want to use patient information for any reason other than the purpose for which it was gathered, first obtain the written consent of the patient.
- Allow patients access to the information you hold about them. Do not withhold information on the basis of an unresolved dispute.

2. PRINCIPLE Safe practice

Professional standards

- 8 You must practise within your professional knowledge, skills and competence, or refer to another health practitioner.
 - 9 You must identify and manage health and safety risks within your practice environment
 - 10 You must maintain accurate, time-bound and up-to-date patient records.
 - 11 You must keep your professional knowledge and skills up-to-date through ongoing learning and professional interaction.
 - 12 You must have arrangements in place to manage medical emergencies.
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8 ***You must practise within your professional knowledge, skills and competence; engage in shared-care arrangements; or refer to another health practitioner***

Guidance

- Practise safely and competently to ensure you do not cause harm to your patients.
- Only carry out a task or a type of treatment if you have the knowledge and skills to do so competently within your scope of practice.
- Recognise your own limitations and the special skills of others in diagnosis, prevention and treatment, and refer patients accordingly. Such referral might be to a podiatrist or other health professional.

9 ***You must identify and manage health and safety risks within your practice environment***

Guidance

- Maintain a safe work environment for patients, staff and colleagues and the protection of the public. Identify and appropriately manage potential hazards, and behavioural risks in your place of work.

10 ***You must maintain accurate and up-to-date patient records***

- Patient records should: contain relevant clinical information, options discussed, decisions made and the reasons for them, proposed management plan, and records should be made at the time of consultation or soon after.

11 ***You must keep your professional knowledge and skills up-to-date through ongoing learning and professional interaction***

Guidance

- Be involved in learning activities to update your knowledge and skills throughout your career. Ensure you comply with the Board's recertification programmes.

12 ***You must have arrangements in place to manage medical emergencies***

- Ensure that you have the appropriate tools and processes in place to respond to medical emergencies and contact emergency services if required.

3. PRINCIPLE Effective communication

Standards

- 13 You must communicate honestly, factually and without exaggeration.
 - 14 You must listen to your patients and prioritise their preferences and concerns.
 - 15 You must give patients the information they need or request, in a way they can understand (written, verbal or otherwise), so they can make informed decisions.
 - 16 You must ensure informed consent remains valid at all times.
 - 17 You must communicate openly in inter- and intra- professional healthcare teams for the enhancement of patient care.
 - 18 You must behave respectfully in communication to and about colleagues or other health professionals.
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13 ***You must communicate honestly, factually and without exaggeration***

- The interaction with patients should be built on honesty, and on an accurate and objective assessment of their situation.

14 ***You must listen to your patients and consider their preferences and concerns***

Guidance

- Treat patients as individuals. Take their specific communication needs and preferences into account and respect any cultural values and differences.
- Give your patients the opportunity to discuss their preferences and concerns with you, and encourage patients to ask questions.

15 ***You must give patients the information they need or request, in a way they can understand, so they can make informed decisions***

Guidance

- Provide information that is clear to patients.
- Recognise communication barriers and meet patients' individual communication needs. Confirm your patients' understanding of the information given to them.
- Allow patients the time they need to make an informed decision.

16 ***You must ensure informed consent remains valid at all times***

Guidance

- Giving and obtaining informed consent is an ongoing process of communication between patients and all members of the podiatry team involved in patient care.

17 ***You must communicate openly in inter- and intra- professional healthcare teams for the enhancement of patient care***

Guidance

- When there is a request for information, or when you make a referral, provide detailed and accurate patient records to another health practitioner involved in the care of the patient in a timely manner.

18 ***You must behave respectfully in communication to and about colleagues or other health professionals***

Guidance

- Treat your colleagues courteously, respectfully and reasonably in all forms of communication – verbal or written, or in any public media – including [social media](#).

4. PRINCIPLE Quality care

Professional standards

- 19 You must take a comprehensive approach to care appropriate to the individual patient.
 - 20 You must provide care that is clinically justified and based on the best available evidence.
 - 21 You must collaborate with colleagues and other health practitioners, and contribute to teamwork for enhanced patient outcomes.
 - 22 You must protect and promote the health of patients and the public.
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19 ***You must take a comprehensive approach to care appropriate to the individual patient***

Guidance

- A comprehensive approach is all-inclusive; it requires you to give consideration to the patient's overall health, their psychological and social situation, their foot and lower limb health needs (immediate and long term) and their desired outcomes.
- Provide patients with podiatry health advice and treatment options relevant to their situation, and discuss associated benefits, likely outcomes and potential risks.
- Carefully balance the patient's podiatry health needs with the patient's wishes and be able to explain your approach to care, which could include declining to treat.
- Restrict your treatment to the activities permitted by your registered scope of practice. Refer patients who present with issues beyond your area of practice or competence.

20 ***You must provide care that is clinically justified and based on the best available evidence***

Guidance

- Clinical justification is the progressive evaluation of treatment outcomes as part of professional accountability; it is of particular importance when treatment occurs over an extended period of time.
- Assess the outcomes of treatment at regular intervals to determine if treatment should continue or cease, or if, and when a patient should be referred to another health practitioner or specialist.
- To inform your care use the best available evidence resulting from scientific research, or if absent, strong theoretical rationale, suggestive evidence, or the opinions of respected authorities.

21 ***You must collaborate with colleagues and other health practitioners, and contribute to teamwork for enhanced patient outcomes***

Guidance

- Work effectively with your colleagues and other health practitioners to provide good care to patients. Respect the contribution of all team members involved in patients' care.

22 ***You must protect and promote the health of patients and the public***

Guidance

- Enable patients to maintain and enhance their individual well-being by increasing their awareness and understanding of health matters.
- Initiate and/or participate in broader based community intervention or setting of public policy, where necessary and practicable.
- If your personal position on any aspect of podiatry health differs from that of the relevant profession, inform your patients and the public of this fact and of the extent to which your position differs from the collectively held view.

5. PRINCIPLE Integrity and professionalism

Professional standards

- 23 You must ensure your professional and personal conduct justifies trust in you and your profession.
- 24 You must be familiar, and comply, with your legal and professional obligations.
- 25 You must act with honesty and integrity at all times with patients, colleagues and the public.
- 26 You must maintain appropriate boundaries in your interactions with patients, colleagues and the public.
- 27 You must protect the interests of patients and colleagues from any risk posed by your personal issues or health, or those of a colleague.
- 28 You must protect the interests of patients and colleagues from any risk posed by your competence or conduct, or that of a colleague or an employee.
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23 ***You must ensure your professional and personal conduct justifies trust in you and your profession***

Guidance

- Treat all team members, colleagues, patients and members of the public fairly, with respect and in accordance with the law, in all personal and professional dealings. You are a professional at all times.
- Do not make malicious or unfounded criticisms of colleagues that may undermine patients' trust in the care or treatment they receive; or the profession.

24 ***You must be familiar, and comply, with your legal and professional obligations***

Guidance

- Find out about the laws and regulations that affect your work and follow them.
- Understand that laws and regulations may change and it is your responsibility to keep up to date with those affecting your work.
- Inform the Podiatrists Board immediately if any matter arises that could impact on your fitness to practise, such as a health condition, any criminal proceedings, a court conviction, or an investigation.
- Co-operate fully with any investigatory or legal processes and be honest and accurate in your responses.

25 ***You must act with honesty and integrity at all times with patients, colleagues and the public***

Guidance

- Respect the right of your colleagues and patients to hold different views, and do not make personal, inaccurate or derogatory comments about your colleagues or patients.
- Be honest and open in any financial dealings with patients, employers, insurers or other organisations and individuals.

26 ***You must maintain appropriate boundaries in your interactions with patients, colleagues and the public***

Guidance

- Do not take advantage of your position as a podiatry health professional in your interactions with patients and the public.

27 ***You must protect the interests of patients and colleagues from any risk posed by your personal issues or health, or those of a colleague***

Guidance

- Seek appropriate medical advice as soon as possible.
- If you suspect or know that patients or colleagues may be at risk because of your mental or physical health, you are required to inform the Podiatrists Board, and follow its advice.
- If you have good reason to believe a colleague is suffering from a health condition which could affect their ability to deliver patient care or place colleagues at risk, you are required to inform the Podiatrists Board.³
- A health condition includes substance abuse or addictions.

28 ***You must protect the interests of patients and colleagues from any risk posed by your competence or conduct, or that of a colleague or an employee***

Guidance

- If you are an employer of a practitioner who resigns or is dismissed from their employment for reasons relating to competence, you are required to notify the Podiatrists Board.⁴
- If you know, or suspect, that patients or colleagues may be at risk because of your competence or conduct, or that of a colleague, you have a professional obligation to inform the Podiatrists Board.

DISCLAIMER

While the links in this document are extensive, they are not exclusive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Podiatrists Board acknowledges the Dental Council's Standards Framework which formed the basis of this document.

³ Section 45 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

⁴ Section 45 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.