

Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis  
Medical Council

Dr Josh Keaveny  
Dean, Faculty of Pain Medicine  
College of Anaesthetists of Ireland  
22 Merrion Square North  
Dublin 2

28<sup>th</sup> April 2014

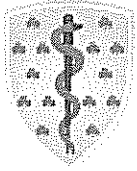
**Re: Recognition of Pain Medicine as a Specialty**

Dear Dr Keaveny,

Ministerial consent to the recognition of specialties is a requirement of Section 89(1) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 (MPA); I am writing to confirm that the Minister for Health has consented to the recognition of 'Pain Medicine' as a specialty.

I would like to confirm the basis upon which Pain Medicine has been recognised, and the actions which arise as a result of this recognition.

1. Pain Medicine is now recognised as a medical specialty under Section 89(1) of the MPA.
2. The College of Anaesthetists of Ireland (*via* the Faculty of Pain Medicine) is responsible and accountable to the Medical Council, as a recognised postgraduate training body, for matters relating to Pain Medicine within the provisions of the MPA.
3. Pain Medicine has been recognised on the basis that it will be supported within Ireland with a 'dual-specialty' model of specialist training ie. practitioners seeking to pursue specialist training in Pain Medicine will have already completed specialist training in another specialty.
4. The College of Anaesthetists of Ireland (*via* the Faculty of Pain Medicine) will need to consider the formal establishment of a programme of specialist training in Pain Medicine which would lead to the award of a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST). Any proposed programme of specialist training will need to meet the Medical Council's '*Accreditation Standards for Postgraduate Medical Education and Standards*', copy attached.
5. The College of Anaesthetists of Ireland, *via* the Faculty of Pain Medicine, will become responsible for the assessment of applications to the Specialist Division of the Register under Section 47(1)(b) and (f) of the MPA.
6. Section 47(1)(b) applies to medical practitioners who have successfully completed a recognised programme of specialist training in Pain Medicine in Ireland, under the supervision of the College and Faculty. Graduates of this programme must be awarded a CSCST. The holder of the CSCST will be recognised for the purpose of automatic registration in the Specialist Division in accordance with Section 47(1)(b) of the Act.
7. Section 47(1)(f) applies to medical practitioners who have not completed a recognised programme of specialist training in Pain Medicine in Ireland. Such practitioners will be



## Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis Medical Council

required to have their existing training and experience assessed by the College and Faculty to determine whether the training and experience is comparable to that of a graduate of the training programme in Ireland. The College and Faculty will need to confirm to the Medical Council the version of the training programme and associated criteria and standards which will be applied during such assessments. The standards must comply with the model developed in the proposed Service Level Agreement (currently under negotiation with postgraduate training bodies) for the assessment of applications under Section 47(1)(f) of the MPA. It will not be possible to accept applications under Section 47(1)(f) until the programme is available and the associated standards have been drafted.

8. As Pain Medicine is not recognised for the purpose of mutual recognition of qualifications in EU Directive 2005/36/EC, Sections 47(1)(c), (d) or (e) of the MPA (applications from medical practitioners trained or otherwise established in Pain Medicine in another EU-EEA member state) will not apply. All prospective applicants will fall under Section 47(1)(f).
9. A new category for Pain Medicine will be established within the Specialist Division of the Register. The College and Faculty will be asked to advise the Medical Council on the number of medical practitioners currently registered as specialists in Ireland who may wish to be registered in the Specialist Division in the specialty of Pain Medicine. These doctors will be required to undergo an assessment by the College and Faculty under Section 47(1)(f). However, as mentioned above, such assessments cannot proceed until the necessary domestic standards have been drafted.
10. Within the provisions of Section 91(4) of the MPA 2007, the Medical Council has recognised, and entered into arrangements with, 13 postgraduate training bodies to operate a range of professional competence schemes; these bodies include the College of Anaesthetists of Ireland. The College and Faculty will need to consider how medical practitioners holding specialist registration in Pain Medicine will be facilitated to meet their professional competence obligations under Part 11 of the MPA 2007.
11. The College and Faculty may wish to consider establishing a model of training governance which maximises the inputs from other specialties, particularly those specialties which may be viewed as possible entry points to specialist training in Pain Medicine.

It would be helpful to hold a meeting to discuss the above, and to consider next steps. I would be grateful if you could confirm your availability to meet during May 2014.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Lyons  
Senior Executive Officer  
**Education & Training**

- Cc** Dr Anne Keane, Head of Education and Training, Medical Council  
Dr Paul Kavanagh, Director of Professional Development and Practice, Medical Council  
Mr Philip Brady, Head of Registration, Medical Council
- Encl.** *Medical Council Accreditation Standards for Postgraduate Medical Education and Training*