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CPCA calls for stronger regulations for range of cosmetic treatments

The Cosmetic Physicians College of Australasia (CPCA) is deeply saddened by the tragic incident that recently occurred at the Medi Beauty Clinic in Chippendale, NSW, and said it has for many years now, been calling for stronger regulations for a range of cosmetic medicine treatments.

The CPCA said it welcomed last week's announcement that the NSW government will review regulations for beauty clinics but has written to the Minister for Health to request that all aspects of cosmetic medicine form part of the review, so patients can rest assured they are being treated by an appropriately trained and insured expert, operating within a national uniform regulatory environment.

In Australia, the only states that have regulation covering the use of light devices, such as laser and IPL, are Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania. The most populated states, New South Wales and Victoria, have no regulation or registration mechanisms for either the devices or the operators.

"The CPCA strongly believes national uniform laser regulation should be implemented in order to reduce patient injuries and the risk of sub-optimal outcomes of which our members are increasingly being made aware," Dr Dingley said.

Beauty therapists are able to advertise things such as laser treatments, direct to the public, without the constraints applied to medical practitioners, therefore enticing the unwary public towards a less-safe environment. Further to this issue, the use of names like 'Medi Beauty' or 'Medi Spa' have the potential to mislead the public into thinking that they are dealing with medically qualified personnel in a medical environment. The CPCA believes the use of such terms as 'Medi' by non-medical practitioners should be banned.

The CPCA also believes the growing incidence of the application of Schedule 4 medications, without prior consultation by a doctor, should be addressed during the proposed NSW review. The Medical Board of Australia allows the prescribing of Schedule 4 Medicine (for example botulinum toxin) by video. Such consultations were intended to help doctors and patients consult with city-based specialists without the need to incur the expense and delays caused by travelling long distances. The intent was that the patient would visit their rural GP who would use video messaging to contact the relevant specialist with the patient.

"Cosmetic medicine is a three dimensional skill, requiring a full and detailed one-on-one consultation by a medical practitioner who possesses suitable expertise in patient psychology, as well as medical conditions and comorbidity, which can affect patient management.

"The reality is that some practitioners are now using video to remotely perform perfunctory, inadequate consultations and then instructing nurses in beauty clinics to administer the treatment, which is an abuse of what was otherwise an excellent amendment to facilitate speedier delivery of urgent medical treatments in remote areas," Dr Dingley said.

The CPCA believes it is in a patient's best interest to select only qualified and experienced doctors when considering a cosmetic procedure. CPCA members focus on providing cosmetic medicine so patients can rest assured they are being treated by an appropriately trained expert.

“Our members are repeatedly called upon to perform remedial treatment as a result of ‘botched’ treatments by poorly trained providers, often operating out of beauty clinics. Cases have included severe burns, facial disfigurement and the misdiagnosed treatment of skin disorders and diseases such as melanoma.

“In many such cases, the provider of the original treatment did not have the appropriate professional indemnity in place to cover the cost of remedial treatment, causing further hardship to the victim. It should be a mandatory requirement that all providers of cosmetic medicine treatments – not just doctors - carry an appropriate level of professional indemnity,” Dr Dingley said.

The CPCA is also calling on State Health Ministers to coordinate a national response, to deliver uniform regulation for the provision of cosmetic medicine in Australia.

Patients interested in finding a qualified doctor with an interest in non-invasive cosmetic medicine can visit www.cPCA.net.au

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For further information or to request an interview with a CPCA spokesperson, please contact Res Publica:

Baden Parker-Brown | bparkerbrown@respublica.com.au | 0406 001 668

About the Cosmetic Physicians College of Australasia

The CPCA represents the largest body of doctors who perform non- or minimally-invasive cosmetic medical treatments in Australia. Incorporated in October 2014, the CPCA emerged from an earlier organisation - the Cosmetic Physicians Society of Australasia (CPSA).

The CPCA extended the role of the CPSA by taking the form of a traditional college with regards to education, training and ethical practice standards. The CPCA’s objectives include developing and maintaining high standards of learning, skills and conduct in cosmetic medicine to help safeguard the public. The CPCA will also support public education and awareness of the benefits of cosmetic medicine.