



House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, PO Box 6021,
Parliament House, Canberra
ACT 2600

Good Day.

I am a General Practitioner who studied and trained in the Philippines. I graduated in 1998 and underwent training in pediatrics. I was practicing as a family physician and running my own medical clinic prior to arriving in Australia.

I arrived in Australia in February 2006.

I worked as a GP in the Gold Coast from March 2006 to July 2008 under Special Registration 135. I have built an impressive patient base but had to leave and transfer to Townsville to be under a better supervisor so as to improve my chances of gaining fellowship.

Prior to moving to Townsville, in 2007, I was given 4 years by the Medical Board of Queensland to obtain my Australian qualifications (pass and obtain an AMC certification or gain fellowship with the RACGP).

I started working at Bluewater Medical Practice in September 2008. Bluewater is an "area of need" and a "district of workforce shortage". Aside from practicing as a GP in Bluewater, I became involved in skin cancer management and surgery, mental health, and women's health issues. Being in north Queensland, I managed quite a number of patients with skin cancer conditions.

I received my overseas assessment from the RACGP in December 2008. I had enough overseas and Australian experience based on their assessment. I then became eligible to sit the AKT and KFP exams of the RACGP. I attempted the AKT and KFP twice but unfortunately failed. The only support I had through my exams was a clinical teaching I received from my supervisor.

I then opted to do Practice Based Assessment (PBA) in January 2010 as a route to fellowship. I completed all 3 modules of this examination on April 2010.

The Medical Board advised me in January 2010 that I need to sit the Pre-Employment Structured Clinical Interview (PESCI) in order to renew my registration. This was administered by ACRRM.

I went for the PESCI interview in February 2010 but failed and was advised that I was not fit to practice. The PESCI went on for 1 hour and 30 minutes and that was enough for ACRMM to judge me as unfit to work as a GP. They were able to conclude in 90 minutes that my capabilities as a doctor for the past 12 years was not enough for me to continue practicing in Australia, to which I strongly disagree.

I submitted to the medical board several letter of support from politicians (MP's), loyal patients, and from my supervisor regarding my performance as a doctor.

I also provided a letter from the RACGP stating that I have my PBA results pending since the result was to be ratified 8th October 2010. If I pass the PBA exam, I would be eligible to apply for fellowship with the RACGP.

I also stated that I still have until 2011 to complete all exams or gain fellowship under the medical board's rules of June 2007.

Despite these requests and supporting documents, the medical board refused to renew my registration in June 2010.

I had to leave Australia on 1st July 2010 because of my Visa conditions. I had to sell all my properties and relocate back to the Philippines.

I had to leave 5 years of my life in Australia and go back home. For me, this was the hardest part of my ordeal. To see all your belongings, you kids' toys and their school uniforms be given away or sold. Plus the fact that my 9 year old daughter was leaving all her friends she has. It was really heart breaking.

On the 8th of October 2010, I passed the PBA.

I was awarded fellowship to the RACGP in November 2010.

I am currently applying for registration and, unfortunately, have to undergo through the whole process again .

I was advised by AHPRA that since I am not currently practicing and is living overseas I have to prove my identity, supply certified documents that I have to their office for verification, and personally appear in their office for an identity check before they can grant me registration.

I had to do everything from square 1. The documents I have supplied to them are the same documents I supplied to the medical board when I was in Australia. Nothing was changed in my documents except for my English Language Test result. To simply put it, I am virtually unknown to them.

My application for specialist registration was received by AHPRA on 30th of November 2010. I am still awaiting if AHPRA will grant me registration or not as

I write this. I will no longer mention the amount of time and money I have spent on overseas calls just to follow up the progress of my registration.

The income lost I have lost and psychological challenge that my family and I had to go through is unquantifiable. If the medical board allowed me to renew my registration and allowed me to practice for another 4 months pending my PBA results then none of these would have happened.

I have not been practicing medicine since I left Australia in July 2010. I had to concentrate on relocating my family back home and their adjustment. This was not easy. Ironically it was a bit of a "culture shock" for my children during the first 5 months back in the Philippines.

And while all of these things are happening, Bluewater Medical Practice have been running on only 3 full time doctors, from a previous 7 full time doctors. Most of patients are now waiting for several days to before they can be seen. They are being advised to present to another surgery or go straight to Townsville Hospital for medical care.

For me this is unacceptable. They are being denied basic medical care because of what has happened to me and other doctors in Bluewater Medical Centre. It is the patients and the people of Bluewater, Rollingstone, and Townsville that are the ones who are also greatly affected and disadvantaged.

I wish the politician and those people trying to run the Medical Board get out there and see for themselves what's happening with the patients of Bluewater Medical Centre and residents of Rollingstone in north Queensland.

The country's medical force is made up of 45 % IMGs. We should be supported and not driven away.

Thank you very much for your time.