



# **Guide to Medical Panels hearings for personal injury claimants**

**What to expect at a Medical Panels hearing**

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## **So you've been referred to Medical Panels**

An independent Medical Panel will provide an opinion when there is disagreement or uncertainty about whether your degree of impairment resulting from the alleged injury, satisfies the prescribed threshold level.

A Medical Panel opinion on a medical question is considered final and conclusive by any court, body or person.

## **It's important to attend your Medical Panels hearing**

This brochure will provide all the information you need so that you know what to expect at your hearing.



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## What is Medical Panels?

Medical Panels is an independent panel of medical practitioners and healthcare professionals who provide opinions on any medical questions under the legislation where there is a dispute.

Each medical panel functions as a tribunal that provides final and legally binding answers to specific medical questions put to them by a court, body or person eligible to make a referral.

## What is a Medical Panel hearing?

A Medical Panel hearing will involve an expert panel of specialist doctors who will look at how much your 'whole person impairment' is a result of the alleged injury in your claim. They will then decide whether it meets the prescribed threshold level.

## What happens during a Medical Panel hearing?

### Confirmation of your hearing

The Medical Panels office will email you information about your hearing. The list of all the material received with the referral will also be sent to you, including the name of the respondent.

If you need copies of any material that the respondent has provided to Medical Panels, please contact the respondent directly to obtain the copies.

You can also send the Medical Panels office copies of any further material you wish the panel to see.

If you are legally represented, the Medical Panels office will also send copies of all correspondence to your representative.

## At the hearing

The Medical Panel hearing will involve you seeing one or more doctors, either individually or jointly for an examination. Most hearings are held at the Medical Panels office. If it's in a different location, we'll let you know in your hearing confirmation email.

The Medical Panel will ask you about the history of your claimed injury or condition. This will be a detailed discussion and may include your work history, previous medical history and/or life experiences.

The Medical Panel will invite you to comment on the medical questions, and the material provided to the panel.

The hearing may also include a physical examination.

A thorough physical examination may require the Medical Panel to examine parts of your body beyond the immediate area of your injury. For example, your legs may be examined when claiming for a back injury.

It's likely that you'll need to remove your clothing for the physical examination. Please wear clothing and under garments that allow you to undress with ease. Gowns will be provided. Nursing staff are available on request to assist where required and may be present during the examination. You may request a nurse to be present as a chaperone.

The Medical Panel may need to look at any X-rays, test results and hospital summaries that you bring, that haven't already been provided as part of the referral.

## After your hearing

Medical Panels will discuss your case. You may be requested to attend another hearing or provide further information. If this is required, you will receive clear instructions from the Medical Panels office on what you need to do.

If nothing further is required, the Medical Panel will form their opinion, and this will be sent to all relevant parties.

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## Do I have to attend my Medical Panel hearing?

Yes. It's important you attend your hearing. Cancellation will require rescheduling of your hearing which will cause a delay in resolving your case. If you're unable to attend a hearing, please notify the Medical Panels office immediately.

## Will my hearing be on time?

Most Medical Panel hearings take place on time. However, sometimes the panel may be running late. This can happen because of a medical emergency or the complexity of some hearings.

If you are able to wait, the panel will see you as soon as they can. If not, you can request our reception staff to arrange another hearing for you.

## How long will the hearing take?

Hearings normally take between 30 and 90 minutes.

The duration of each hearing depends on the complexity and nature of the injury. A full history of your injury or condition will be discussed during your hearing. This may include a:

- thorough physical or psychiatric examination
- review of the referral material and reports provided.

## What if I am running late to the hearing?

We understand that sometimes there may be unexpected delays.

If you are running late, please call the Medical Panels' office on 1800 061 715 to let us know. The Medical Panel hearing may need to be cancelled and rescheduled to another date and time. This is to ensure the panel has enough time for your assessment.

Please allow plenty of time to get to your hearing. If you need directions or have any doubt about how to get to the hearing, contact the Medical Panels office.

## Can I attend my hearing online or by phone?

In some cases, you'll be advised your hearing is to be conducted online by Zoom. This depends on the complexity and type of your claim. If you have a Zoom hearing scheduled, you'll be provided with a Zoom user guide. You can also request a test call with one of our Zoom officers if needed.

You can request your Zoom hearing be changed to be an in-person hearing. There can be long waiting periods for in-person hearings and the resolution of your dispute may be delayed.

You cannot attend your hearing by phone call.

If your hearing is scheduled as an in-person hearing, you'll need to attend in person at the location mentioned in your hearing confirmation email.

## Can the Medical Panel advise me about treatment?

No. The Medical Panel is not permitted to advise you on the treatment of your injury or condition.

The panel's role is to make an independent assessment of your condition, and give their opinion to the court, body or person who referred the medical questions.

## Will I need to do any special tests?

The Medical Panel will check the tests that have been completed by any other doctors you've seen, and which have been made available to the panel. Sometimes the Medical Panel may need to arrange for you to have additional X-rays or other basic investigations such as hearing tests.

If these are needed, the panel (with your consent) will arrange this with your treating healthcare practitioner.

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## What happens with surveillance video?

Surveillance video may be provided to the panel. The panel will view the footage with you and ask for you to respond to it.

Please contact the referrer to receive copies of any surveillance video applicable to your claim if this is listed as part of your referral documentation. You must do this before your hearing.

## Will the Medical Panel contact my treating healthcare practitioner?

The Medical Panel may need to contact your treating healthcare practitioner but will only do so with your consent.

This applies to contacting not only your treating healthcare practitioner, but also providers of any medical and related services (such as physiotherapists and psychologists).

Our office will organise this for you.

## What should I bring with me?

If you have a copy of the following information relating to your condition, you should bring it with you to the hearing.

- X-rays, CT scans, MRI scans, nerve conduction studies and the reports that go with them.
- Results of any other tests (such as blood tests, urine tests or any other tests).
- A list of medications.

You should contact the Medical Panels office if you're unable to obtain a test result or report that you believe should be considered by the panel. If the panel considers it as relevant, you'll be asked to sign a consent form. Medical Panels will use this form to obtain the test result or report.

## Can I give the panel extra information?

Yes, you can provide the panel with extra information if you want. This can include:

- medical reports from a hospital, doctor or allied health professional
- a summary of information in your own words.

You can send this information by mail or email to our office before or after your hearing. You can also bring any additional information with you to the hearing. Any additional information provided after the Medical Panel has formed its opinion will not be considered. Any information you provide to medical panels will be made available to all parties.

## Can I bring a friend or family member with me?

You are welcome to bring a friend or family member with you for support when you attend Medical Panels.

Given the personal and private nature of some questions asked, the panel will decide at the time of your hearing whether a support person can be present during the hearing. As the panel decides this, we won't be able to confirm this to you over the phone before the hearing.

## Can I bring someone to represent me?

If you are a 'person under disability' you are entitled to representation under law. This includes if you are:

- under 18 years of age
- with a disability and incapable of self-advocacy
- with legally/court appointed advocates, litigation guardians/representative.

If you are entitled to have a representative under the law, please contact our office so suitable arrangements can be made to ensure your representative can accompany you to the hearing.

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## Can I bring my children?

Please don't bring children to your hearing. The panel would like to speak to you without distraction. If you do, your hearing may need to be postponed/rescheduled.

Note, Medical Panels do not provide child minding facilities. If it is unavoidable that a child comes with you, another person must attend with you to supervise the child while you are in the examination room.

## Can I bring a service animal with me?

You can bring a registered assistance dog to your hearing. You may be asked to provide evidence that the assistance dog is qualified, accredited and serving the person they are with.

Please advise the Medical Panels' office if you will be attending with your assistance dog.

Please note that emotional support animals are not recognised by law in Australia and are not permitted to attend.

## What if I need an interpreter?

If an interpreter has been arranged for your hearing, your hearing confirmation email will confirm this.

If you're not sure if an interpreter has been arranged and you need one, please contact our office as soon as possible before the hearing.

If we are not aware you need an interpreter, the hearing may not be able to proceed. It will be rescheduled for another day and time.

Please note, friends and family members are not allowed to interpret for you.

## Is there a cost?

The respondent pays the cost of your assessment. This includes any reasonable transport arrangements for attending your Medical Panel hearing. Please contact the respondent directly for reimbursement information.

## Will I get a medical certificate?

If requested, the Medical Panels office can provide you with a Certificate of Attendance.

## When will I receive the opinion?

When the Medical Panel has written up its medical opinion, it will be sent to all relevant parties. Opinions may be released as soon as 24 hours after your hearing. However, the panel will usually provide its medical opinion within 30 days of the last hearing. If the panel needs more time, your representative and the referrer will be informed.

## What if I am unhappy about aspects of the hearing?

If you're unhappy about any part of your Medical Panel hearing, you can reach us by:

- phone on 1800 061 715
- mail to Medical Panels, Level 6 (North Tower), 485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
- email [info@medicalpanels.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@medicalpanels.vic.gov.au)

## What if I disagree with the Medical Panel opinion?

The Medical Panel can't reopen your matter once it has issued its opinion. If you don't agree with the opinion, seek legal advice.

## Where is the Medical Panels office?

The Medical Panels office is located at Level 6 (North Tower), 485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne. Most hearings are conducted here. Please refer to the map at the end of this brochure for location, public transport, and parking information.

You should check your hearing letter to confirm the venue of your hearing.

## Where can I find more information?

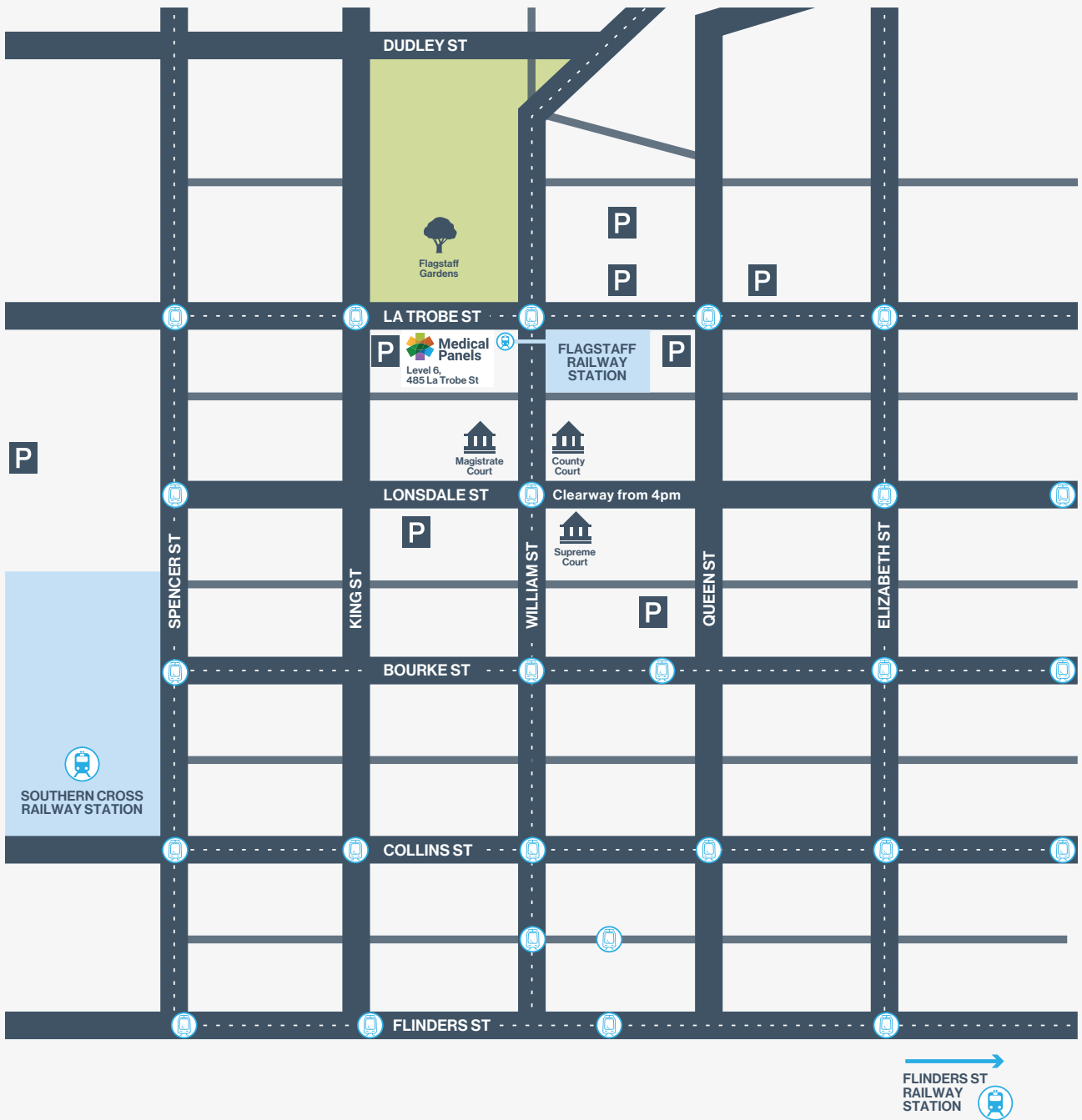
You can find more information about your hearing on our website: [medicalpanels.vic.gov.au](http://medicalpanels.vic.gov.au)

## Support

We understand that dealing with a Panel Hearing can be a difficult and stressful time. If you'd like to talk to someone, these services may be of assistance:

- Lifeline – [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au) phone 131 114 (Australia-wide)
- Beyond Blue – [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au) phone 1300 224636 (Australia-wide)
- SuicideLine – phone 1300 651 251 (Victoria)
- Your local GP or mental healthcare professional





The Medical Panels office is located at  
Level 6 (North Tower), 485 La Trobe Street Melbourne

Please note this map is not to scale

-  Tram Stops
-  Tramlines

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## Glossary of terms

### Convener

The Convener of Medical Panels is the head of the organisation and is appointed by the relevant Victorian Government Minister.

### Claimant

A claimant is the party who makes a claim against the Respondent(s).

### Respondent

A Respondent is a party against whom a claim is made.

### Whole Person Impairment

This defines the medical rating of permanent impairment in an assessment.

### Threshold Impairment Level

The level of impairment which must be reached in an assessment.

### Person under disability

A worker who is incapable of managing their affairs in a referral due to a physical or mental condition.

This includes a minor.



Level 6 (North Tower),  
485 La Trobe Street  
Melbourne, Victoria 3000  
GPO Box 2709  
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

**Email**  
[info@medicalpanels.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@medicalpanels.vic.gov.au)

**Phone**  
(03) 8256 1555

**Fax**  
(03) 8256 1550

**Toll free**  
1800 061 715

**Website**  
[medicalpanels.vic.gov.au](http://medicalpanels.vic.gov.au)

**Business hours**  
Monday to Friday, 8:45 am to 5:00 pm

Call 131 450 to translate this information or to speak to Medical Panels in your language. For more information about this free service, visit [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

**Sinhalese**

මෙම තොරතුරු පරිවර්තනය කරනු ලැබීම සඳහා හෝ ඔබගේ භාෂාවෙන් වෙළඳ මට්ටමට හා කටා කරනු ලැබීම සඳහා දුරකථන අංක 131 450 අමතන්න. හෝ මිලදියේ සපයනු ලබන මෙම සේවාව පිළිබඳ අමතර විස්තර සඳහා 'Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)' වෙබ් අඩවියට පිවිසෙන්න.

**Rohingya**

Eí maalamat yāan tuāñir nijór zuban ór lekát maáni bánǵi diballá yáto Medikel Penel ór fúañti hotá hoiballá kol goro 131450. Eí maána sarvíg or baboté aró maalamat zaniballá, eçe sóo [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

**Tagalog**

Tumawag sa 131450 para isalin sa wika ang impormasyong ito o upang makipag-usap sa Panel na Medikal sa inyong wika. Para sa higit na impormasyon tungkol sa libreng serbisyo, bisitahin ang [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

**Macedonian**

Јавете се на 131 450 за превод на оваа информација или за да разговарате со Медицински одбор на вашиот јазик. За повеќе информации за оваа бесплатна услуга, посетете го Националната служба [\(TIS National\)](#).

**Hindi**

इस जानकारी का अनुवाद करने या अपनी भाषा में मेडिकल पैनल से बात करने के लिए 131 450 पर कॉल करें। इस निःशुल्क सेवा के बारे में अधिक जानकारी के लिए, अनुवाद और दूमाषिया सेवा [\(TIS National\)](#) पर जाएँ।

**Punjabi**

ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੈਡੀਕਲ ਪੈਨਲ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ 131 450 'ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ। ਇਸ ਮੁਫਤ ਸੇਵਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੱਧ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ, [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#) 'ਤੇ ਜਾਓ।

**Arabic**

اتصل على الرقم 131 450 لترجمة هذه المعلومات أو للتحديث إلى اللجان الطبية بلغتك. لمزيد من المعلومات حول هذه الخدمة المجانية، تفضل بزيارة خدمة الترجمة التحريرية والشفوية [\(TIS National\)](#).

**Persian**

به 131 450 تلفن کنید تا این اطلاعات را برای شما ترجمه کنند یا به زبان خودتان با Medical Panels (هیئت های پزشکی) صحبت کنید. برای اطلاعات بیشتر در باره این خدمات رایگان از [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#) ترجمه نوشتاری و گفتاری (تیس نیشنال) دیدن کنید.

**Khmer**

ហៅទូរស័ព្ទទៅលេខ 131 450 ដើម្បីបកប្រែព័ត៌មាននេះ ឬនិយាយទៅកាន់កុមរដ្ឋសវន្ត (Medical Panels) ជាភាសារបស់អ្នក។ ស្រមាប់ព័ត៌មានបន្ថែមអំពីសវនាកម្មព័ត៌មានច្នៃច្នៃស្តុះស្តុះស្តុះចូលទៅកាន់ សេវាបកប្រែភាសាសរសេរ និងបកប្រែផ្ទាល់មាត់ [\(TIS National\)](#)។

**Burmese**

ဤအချက်အလက်များကို သင့်ဘာသာစကားသို့ ဘာသာပြန်ဆိုလိုလျှင် သို့မဟုတ် ဆေးဘက်ဆိုင်ရာအဖွဲ့များနှင့် စကားပြောဆိုလိုလျှင် 131 450 သို့ ဖုန်းခေါ်ဆိုပါ။ ဤအခမဲ့ဝန်ဆောင်မှုနှင့်ပတ်သက်၍ အချက်အလက်ပိုမိုသိရှိလိုပါက ဘာသာပြန်နှင့် စကားပြန်ဝန်ဆောင်မှု [\(Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)\)](#) သို့ ဝင်ရောက်ကြည့်ရှုပါ။

**Korean**

이 정보에 대한 번역이 필요하시거나 한국어로 Medical Panels와 통화를 원하시면 131 450으로 전화하세요. 이 무료 통번역 서비스에 대한 자세한 정보는 [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#) 에서 찾아보실 수 있습니다.

**Mandarin**

拨打 131 450 即可翻译此信息或以您的语言与医疗小组交谈。有关此免费服务的更多信息，请访问[翻译和口译服务 \(TIS National\)](#)。

**Vietnamese**

Hãy gọi số 131 450 để dịch thông tin này hoặc nói chuyện với Hội đồng Y tế bằng ngôn ngữ của quý vị. Để biết thêm thông tin về dịch vụ miễn phí này, hãy truy cập Dịch vụ Biên dịch và Phiên dịch [\(TIS National\)](#).

**Hazaragi**

بلده ترجمه كيدون ازی مالومات یا بلده توره گمتو قد هئیت طبی (Medical Panels) زیبون خود خو، د شماره 131 450 زنگ دید. بلده کسب مالومات زیادت د باره ازی خدمت مفت، به خدمات ترجمانی شفاهی و کتبی [\(TIS National\)](#) مراجعه کید.

**Somali**

Wac 131 450 si aad u turjuntid macluumaadkan ama si aad ugula hadashid Dhakhaatiirta Caafimaadka luuqadaada. Wixii macluumaad ah ee intaa ka badan oo ku saabsan adeegan bilaashka ah, booqo Adeegga Turjumaada afka iyo Qoraalka ah ee [\(TIS National\)](#).

**Amharic**

ይህን መረጃ ለህክምና ቡድን በቋንቋ በመተርጎም ለማነጋገር በስልክ 131 450 ይደውሉ። ስለዚህ ያለክፍያ በነጻ አገልግሎት ተጨማሪ መረጃ ለማግኘት በትርጉም እና አስተርጓሚ አገልግሎት [\(TIS National\)](#) ላይ ይጎብኙ።

**Turkish**

Bu bilgilerin tercüme edilmesi veya Tibbi Panellerle kendi dilinizde konuşmak için 131450'yi arayın. Bu ücretsiz hizmet hakkında daha fazla bilgi için Ulusal Tercümanlık Hizmeti'ni [\(Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)\)](#) ziyaret edin.

**Greek**

Καλέστε το 131 450 για να μεταφράσετε αυτές τις πληροφορίες ή για να μιλήσετε σε Ιατρική Επιτροπή στη γλώσσα σας. Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με αυτήν τη δωρεάν υπηρεσία, επισκεφθείτε την Υπηρεσία Μετάφρασης και Διερμηνείας [\(TIS National\)](#) [[Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#)].

**Bosnian**

Nazovite 131 450 da biste preveli ove informacije ili razgovarali s Medical Panels [Jekarskom komisijom] na vašem jeziku. Za više informacija o ovoj besplatnoj usluzi, posjetite Službu za prevodenje i tumačenje [\(TIS National\)](#).

**Italian**

Chiama il 131 450 per ottenere una traduzione di queste informazioni o per parlare a Medical Panels nella tua lingua. Per ulteriori informazioni su questo servizio gratuito, visita il sito internet del servizio nazionale di traduzioni e interpretariato [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

**Croatian**

Nazovite 131 450 kako biste preveli ovu informaciju ili razgovarali s medicinskim komisijama na vašem jeziku. Za više informacija o ovoj besplatnoj usluzi, posjetite [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

**Serbian**

Pozovite 131 450 za prevod ove informacije ili da razgovarate sa Лекарском комисијом [Medical Panels] на свом језику. За више информација о овој бесплатној услузи посетите Националну службу преводилаца и тумача [\(Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)\)](#).

**Spanish**

Llame al 131 450 para traducir esta información o hablar con los Paneles médicos en español. Obtenga más información sobre este servicio gratuito en la página web [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

**Albanian**

Telefononi numrin 131 450 për ta përkthyer këtë informacion ose për të folur me Panellet e Mjekëve në gjuhën tuaj. Për më shumë informacion rreth këtij shërbimi falas, vizitoni Shërbimin e Përkthimit me shkrim ose me gojë [\(TIS National\)](#).



**Medical  
Panels**