

2 Aug 2002

**Circular to: Managers of Pharmacies in Tasmania**

**1. Reporting of suspicious requests/sales of pseudoephedrine products**

Tasmania Police have requested us to pass on their appreciation of the support given by pharmacists in regard to identifying people requesting pseudoephedrine for suspicious purposes. This greatly assists investigation of illicit manufacture of amphetamines. They would like this level of support to continue as such reports help fill in “jig saw pieces” of the illicit drug distribution picture.

Tasmania Police has recommended that pharmacists telephone **Crimestoppers on 1800 005 555** to report any concerns. Crimestopper reports are computerised and rapidly transmitted to the attention of the relevant Drug Bureau office.

**2. Forgeries- Police Contact Phone Numbers**

Pharmacists requiring urgent assistance with problems such as forged prescriptions should contact the Tasmania Police on one of the following numbers

**South 62 30 2111**

**North 63 36 3701**

**North West 64 34 5211**

and ask for the police radio room.

It would also be appreciated if Pharmaceutical Services Branch could be notified of forged prescriptions and thefts of scheduled substances.

**3. Unusual Prescriptions and Orders for Drugs of Dependence**

While noting that the accepted dose of opioids for medical purposes may vary widely, pharmacists are on rare occasions requested to supply drugs of dependence under concerning circumstances. For example, a large quantity of pethidine injections may be ordered for a patient when it is known that the approved indication is for short-term (24 to 36 hours) relief of moderate to severe pain.

In cases where pharmacists become concerned about the supply of such drugs, it is recommended that contact be made with the Pharmaceutical Services Branch by phoning 62 33 2064.

**4. Stock-take of Narcotic Substances Register.**

A recommendation was made in the past that pharmacists carry out a stock take of narcotic substances every three months to check stock against balances shown in the

register and to follow up missed entries and errors. The amount of schedule 8 substances used for medical purposes has escalated rapidly during the past decade so that tracing omissions or errors in a large number of transactions is becoming impractical. It is now recommended that a stock-take be carried out once a month or more frequently.

The concept of electronic registers has been raised on a number of occasions, but no formal proposals to approve particular systems have been received. A key issue is the development of a rigorous system for identifying the pharmacist responsible for each transaction. The Department has developed draft approval criteria, and proposals for electronic registers would be welcome. A copy of the draft criteria can be obtained by phoning 62 33 2064.

### **5. Prescription life for “S4D” substances**

“S4D” substances are generally subject to abuse and /or cause dependence, and prescriptions may only be dispensed within 6 months of the date on which they are written. Prescriptions for ordinary schedule 4 substances are valid for 12 months.

State regulations applying to substances are generally supported by the Health Insurance Commission (see the Schedule of Benefits for Approved Pharmacists and Medical Practitioners, Section 1 yellow pages, part 2 “Drugs of Addiction”).

*Pharmacy managers are requested to bring this circular to the attention of employed pharmacists.*

John Galloway  
**Chief Pharmacist**

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**Pseudoephedrine reports: Crimestoppers 1800 005 555**

**Forged prescriptions and other matters:**

<b>South</b>	<b>62 30 2111</b>
<b>North</b>	<b>63 36 3701</b>
<b>North West</b>	<b>64 34 5211</b>