

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Chief Health Officer - Pharmaceutical Services Branch

GPO BOX 125, HOBART TAS 7001, AUSTRALIA

PH: (03) 6233 3185 FAX: (03) 6233 4021

WEB: WWW.DHHS.TAS.GOV.AU



PHONE: (03) 6233 2064
FACSIMILE: (03) 6233 3904

INFORMATION CIRCULAR TO PHARMACISTS IN TASMANIA:

RECORDING OF OPIOID PHARMACOTHERAPY PROGRAM (OPP) PRESCRIPTIONS ON THE PHARMACY DISPENSING SYSTEM

Pharmacists are reminded that prescriptions for methadone, buprenorphine and buprenorphine/naloxone treatment must be recorded on the pharmacy dispensing system.

The entry should be made when a new prescription is first dispensed. This only needs to be done once for each new prescription. The keeping of written patient administration records does not negate the requirement for prescriptions to be entered on the dispensing system when each new prescription is received.

All prescriptions for Schedule 8 substances must be dispensed in accordance with Regulation 23 of the Poisons Regulations 2008.

The creation of a record on the dispensing system ensures that a report comes to this branch via Real Time Reporting (RTR) or when the narcotic return is lodged each month for those pharmacies not on RTR. This ensures that prescribers do not run the risk of prescribing another opioid to OPP patients and the correct information is available on the Branch database for prescribers who access that database remotely.

If pharmacists have any queries please make contact with Pharmaceutical Services Branch on 6233 2064.

PRESCRIBING OF SCHEDULED SUBSTANCES BY NURSE PRACTITIONERS

The Poisons Act 1971 was amended a number of years ago to allow for the authorisation of Nurse Practitioners to prescribe and supply scheduled substances. Under S25B of the Act a nurse practitioner is authorised to prescribe certain substances in particular circumstances. Up until recently there have been no Nurse Practitioners working in Tasmania

There are a number of steps that occur in the authorisation of a Nurse Practitioner to prescribe scheduled substances. The first is that the registered nurse, on completion of the required training, must be endorsed as a nurse practitioner by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA). Nurse Practitioners are endorsed in particular areas of practice such as aged care, emergency medicine, and diabetes management. The next step is for the nurse practitioner to be employed in a position in that area of practice. Once this has occurred, the Nurse Practitioner can be authorised to prescribe.

The lists of drugs that the Nurse Practitioner can then prescribe is related to the scope of practice of the position in which they are employed. The substances relate to the position and can be prescribed only

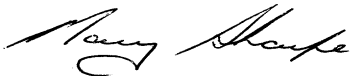
whilst the Nurse Practitioner occupies that position. The list of approved substances must have been endorsed by senior clinicians in the respective area of practice.

To date three areas of practice and formularies for those areas have been approved. These are in Aged Care, Emergency Care and Diabetes Care. The Nurse Practitioners working in positions in these three areas are able to prescribe drugs from the relevant formularies (approved lists) and these can be dispensed for and supplied to patients by pharmacists. A copy of the three formularies can be found on the Pharmaceutical Services Branch website at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/psbtas. It is the Nurse Practitioner's professional responsibility to ensure they are working and prescribing in accordance with their scope of practice. It is not the dispensing pharmacist's responsibility to determine whether or not a Nurse Practitioner is authorised to prescribe.

It should be noted that whilst there are a large number of substances listed on the Commonwealth's Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule, only a small number of these have been authorised for prescribing by Nurse Practitioners under S25B of the *Poisons Act 1971*.

The area of general practice is yet to have a Nurse Practitioner authorised to prescribe and no general practice formulary (list) has yet been authorised. This list will first need endorsement by senior clinicians in the area of general practice and until this occurs Nurse Practitioners working in this area will not be able to prescribe Schedule 4 or 8 substances even though they have been endorsed as Nurse Practitioners by the NMBA.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the Branch on 62 332064.



Mary Sharpe

Chief Pharmacist

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