

# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Population Health - Pharmaceutical Services Branch

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## Newsletter Number 45

### INFORMATION CIRCULAR TO PHARMACISTS IN TASMANIA

#### 1. Prescribing by optometrists

Please note that the list of Class I substances that authorised optometrists may administer, supply or prescribe for the treatment of the eye has been extended to include anti-glaucoma agents. These will be able to be prescribed by authorised optometrists in a shared care model of practice. The glaucoma drugs will only be prescribed by optometrists in a co-managed situation with ophthalmologists and in accordance with the *Guidelines and Protocols for the Therapeutic Drug Use for Authorised Optometrists*. Pharmacists will not be required to monitor this aspect, this is a matter for the Optometrist's professional bodies.

The full list of Class I substances is given in Table I. The list of authorised persons is available at <http://www.regboardstas.com/optometrist/therapeutics.htm>

**Table I. List of Class I substances that may be prescribed by authorised optometrists**

Aciclovir	Dipivefrin	Neomycin
Apraclonidine	Dorzolamide	Ofloxacin
Atropine	Fluorometholone	Olopatadine
Bacitracin	Flurbiprofen	Phenylephrine (S2)
Betaxolol	Framycetin	Pilocarpine
Bimatoprost	Gentamicin sulfate	Polymyxin
Brimonidine	Hydrocortisone	Prednisolone
Brinzolamide	Indomethacin	Sodium cromoglycate (S2)
Carbachol	Ketorolac trometamol	Tetracycline
Chloramphenicol	Latanoprost	Timolol
Ciprofloxacin	Levobunolol	Tobramycin
Dexamethasone	Levocabastine (S2)	Travoprost
Diclofenac	Lodoxamide (S2)	Vidarabin

#### 2. Finding the Poisons Regulations 2008, Poisons List and Poisons (Declared Restricted Substances) Order

Please note that the Poisons Regulations have been reissued and updated. They are now titled the *Poisons Regulations 2008*.

The *Poisons Regulations 2008*, the *Poisons List* and the *Poisons (Declared Restricted Substances) Order* may be found at the Tasmanian Legislation website. These are accessed by:

1. Go to [www.thelaw.tas.gov.au](http://www.thelaw.tas.gov.au)
2. Select "Browse A-Z"
3. Tick "Stat orders"
4. Enter "Poisons Regulations 2008" or Poisons List or Poisons (Declared Restricted Substances) Order 1990 as required
5. Use the left hand side of the split screen to select the relevant regulations or lists

### **3. Poisons Regulations 23 and 46 regarding the dispensing of prescriptions for narcotic substances and Schedule 4 Declared substances has been updated in order to clarify the intent of the regulation.**

There have been a number of concerns regarding the early supply of narcotic and Schedule 4 Declared substances in contravention of the provisions of Poisons Regulations 23 and 46. Pharmacists have been reminded in a joint circular from the Pharmacy Board and Pharmaceutical Services Branch that these substances are subject to significant misuse and diversion and early supply may in some cases present a major patient safety risk. Breaches by pharmacists in respect of these regulations have continued to occur and these matters are being pursued by this Department.

Consequent to these safety concerns and in the interest of public health, a provision has been added to Regulations 23 and 46 that clarifies the reach of the repeat dispensing restrictions. Essentially where a new prescription is presented by a patient for the same S8 or S4D substance, the dispensing interval restrictions are to be applied as if the prescription was a repeat. That is the dispensing interval of this new original must be calculated in the same way as the dispensing interval is calculated between known repeats of the previous original.

To give this effect in Regulations 23 and 46 a final clause has been now states:

"For the purposes of this Regulation, 2 or more prescriptions issued to the same person in respect of the same narcotic substance (or declared restricted substance) are to be treated as a single prescription that directs that the substance may be dispensed more than once".

### **4. Real-time reporting project**

The Branch has been undertaking a project with funding from HealthConnect, a Commonwealth agency, to develop real time reporting from pharmacies of narcotic and alprazolam dispensing. Similar to the connections now in place from pharmacies to Medicare Australia, reporting of dispensing will be made by pharmacies on a continual basis rather than once a month as is now the case. The change will not require pharmacy staff input other than an officer of this Branch will attend pharmacies to install the software (this will commence in late January). The software does not sit directly within your dispensing system and will not impact negatively on your workflow. The Pharmacy Guild and the Division of General Practice are part of the stakeholder committee for this project and the project has the assistance of pharmacy software vendors.

Transfer of information will utilise the security of the Public Key Infrastructure (PKI).

This project, because of a more rapid and timely flow of information, will aid the Branch significantly in tackling a number of issues such as patients seeking narcotics from multiple doctors. A future development that is under consideration is the allowing of access by prescribers and pharmacists to specific data, with in

the confines of privacy and controlled access, that will help them make informed decisions with up-to-date information about the supply of these substances.

These projects have the potential to make a significant and positive impact on the morbidity and mortality experienced in the community from licit drug misuse. The current project is an Australian first and has the potential for adoption in other states and territories.

#### **5. Poisons List Amendments**

The Poisons List changes implemented from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January were mostly of a technical nature. The full Poisons List can be consulted at website cited above.

Please contact the Branch if you have any queries.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Sharpe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mary Sharpe  
Chief Pharmacist  
January 2009