

Interstate prescriptions for Schedule 8 poisons in Victoria

from 1 July 2010

This summary has been prepared by Drugs and Poisons Regulation (DPR) to alert registered health practitioners about the impact of national registration on prescriptions for Schedule 8 poisons. Please refer to the DPR website (www.health.vic.gov.au/dpu) for summary sheets relating to other issues.

The following advice is specific to pharmacists and medical practitioners in Victoria. Some other jurisdictions have legislated to prevent prescriptions for Schedule 8 poisons being valid unless the prescriber is practising in that state or territory.

Previously

The definition of a registered medical practitioner, under the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981* and *Health Professions Registration Act 2005*, was a medical practitioner registered by the Medical Practitioners Board of Victoria. This definition meant that prescriptions for Schedule 8 poisons were not valid in Victoria unless the prescribing medical practitioner was registered in Victoria.

Since 1 July 2010

Implementation of national registration boards, under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Victoria), means that a registered medical practitioner is now defined as a medical practitioner who is registered under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

What this means in Victoria

This change means that prescriptions for Schedule 8 poisons are not invalid merely because the prescriber is not located or practising in Victoria. If a medical practitioner is registered with AHPRA, he/she is considered a registered medical practitioner wherever that term appears in the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act and Regulations*.

Related information for pharmacists

Pharmacists in Victoria must continue to fulfil all professional and regulatory requirements, to ensure a medication is safe and appropriate and that a prescription is lawful, before supplying a Schedule 8 poison on a prescription from any medical practitioner, whether the prescriber is located locally or interstate.

As the handwriting of an interstate practitioner is unlikely to be familiar, pharmacists must take all reasonable steps to confirm that a prescription was written by the purported prescriber and must not assume that a prescription is valid simply because it is computer-generated, doesn't look suspicious or because it has been dispensed previously.

Where it is necessary to communicate with a medical practitioner in relation to the safety or appropriateness of a medication or the lawfulness of a prescription, pharmacists are strongly advised to make a contemporaneous record of the communication.

Related information for medical practitioners

It is possible for prescriptions written by medical practitioners in Victoria for some Schedule 8 poisons to be dispensed in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, **provided interstate requirements are also met**. For instance, some pharmacies interstate will not be able to dispense certain prescriptions unless the prescription has been authorised in that state or territory. Refer to the relevant interstate regulatory group for further information on any additional interstate requirements. Contact details for each interstate regulatory group are listed overleaf.

Prescriptions written by medical practitioners in Victoria for Schedule 8 poisons **cannot** be dispensed in the Northern Territory and Tasmania. This state and territory have legislated to prevent prescriptions for Schedule 8 poisons being valid unless the prescriber is practising in that state or territory.

Further information regarding interstate transfers of patients on methadone or buprenorphine for Opioid Replacement Therapy is also available on the "Pharmacotherapy" section of the DPR website at: www.health.vic.gov.au/dpu/pharm.htm

Medical practitioners in Victoria must still fulfil all professional and regulatory requirements before prescribing Schedule 4 or Schedule 8 poisons for patients who are likely to have prescriptions dispensed in another state or territory. This would include the regulatory requirement to take all reasonable steps to ascertain the identity of the patient and to ensure there is a therapeutic need for the medication as well as all requirements pertaining to permits (for Schedule 8 poisons) and warrants (for ovulatory stimulants, retinoids and other relevant drugs) in Victoria.

Details of registered health practitioners can be located at the AHPRA website www.aphra.gov.au.

For further information

Department of Health

Drugs and Poisons Regulation,
GPO Box 4541
Melbourne 3001

Tel: 1300 364 545

Fax: 1300 360 830

Web: www.health.vic.gov.au/dpu

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Contact details for interstate regulatory groups

Australian Capital Territory

Pharmaceutical Services Branch (ACT)

Phone: (02) 6207 3974 Fax: (02) 6205 0997

Web: <http://health.act.gov.au/health-services/population-health/health-protection-service/pharmaceutical-services/pharmaceutical-services/>

New South Wales

Pharmaceutical Services Branch (NSW)

Phone: (02) 9391 9944 Fax: (02) 9424 5860

Email: pharmserv@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.health.nsw.gov.au/PublicHealth/Pharmaceutical

Northern Territory

Poisons Control

Phone: (08) 8922 7341 Fax: (08) 8922 7200

Web: www.health.nt.gov.au/Environmental_Health/Poisons_Control

Queensland

Drugs of Dependence Unit (Qld)

Phone: (07) 3328 9807 Fax: (07) 3328 9821

Email: DDU@health.qld.gov.au

Web: www.health.qld.gov.au/atod/ddu.asp

South Australia

Drugs of Dependence Unit (SA)

Phone: 1300 652 584 Fax: 1300 658 447

Email: dassadrugsofdependenceunit@health.sa.gov.au

Web: www.dassa.sa.gov.au/goto/ddu

Tasmania

Pharmaceutical Services Branch (Tas)

Phone: (03) 6233 2064 Fax: (03) 6233 3904

Web: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/psbtas/pharmaceutical_services

Western Australia

Pharmaceutical Services Branch (WA)

Phone: (08) 9222 6883 Fax: (08) 9222 2463

Web: www.health.wa.gov.au/pharmacy