

Safe management of electronically transmitted prescriptions during COVID-19

- keeping patients safe and prescribers and pharmacists in step

<p>The Victorian Medicines and Poisons Regulations released Public Health Emergency Order #4 (PHEO #4) which amends legislation to enable the legal dispensing of Schedule 4 medicines from a digital image transmitted electronically. There are limitations and requirements to maintain accountability and safety for patients. The order is in place until 27 March 2021.</p>	
<p>Note: Schedule 8 and Schedule 4 drugs of dependence (<i>benzodiazepines, anabolic steroids, phentermine</i>) are not covered by these amendments</p>	
<p>Key requirements</p>	
Prescriber Processes	Pharmacist Processes
<p>If a digital image of a prescription is transmitted to the pharmacy: Do not send the paper prescription to the pharmacy or patient to avoid risk of duplicating supply.</p>	<p>If paper copy is sent after digital image transmission and supply: Do not reprocess – endorse as supplied and keep apart for return to prescriber when practical.</p>
<p>The digital image must be sent directly to patient’s pharmacy (not to the patient or intermediary). Repeats can be ordered, but must be held and supplied by the same pharmacy that received & dispensed from the digital image. Pharmacies cannot transmit a digital image to another pharmacy.</p>	<p>Print a copy of the digital image. Dispense and claim from digital image. Repeat authorisations are attached to the printed copy of digital image and retained in pharmacy for subsequent supplies. A digital image prescription must not be transmitted to another pharmacy, and must not be dispensed if presented by a patient.</p>
<p>The digital image must include the prescriber’s signature (hand written or digital image of hand written sig which can be applied to the original prescription by an employee upon prescriber’s request).</p>	<p>Cannot dispense if no signature.</p>
<p>Authority Prescriptions must include relevant PBS authority number on the digital image. Do not send the paper prescription.</p>	
<p>Include patient’s phone number for contact by the pharmacist (for safety).</p>	<p>Contact patients as necessary for stock availability, safe supply, collection /delivery.</p>
<p>Record in patient notes that digital image of prescription was sent to pharmacy under PHEO #4.</p>	<p>Record in patient notes that supply on digital image occurred under PHEO #4.</p>
<p>Retain hard copy of original signed prescription in a safe and secure way for 2 years, retrievable for audit.</p>	<p>Retain a copy of the digital image in a safe and secure way for 2 years, retrievable for audit.</p>
<p>Delivery: Patients requiring delivery of medicines should discuss options with their pharmacy. Delivery via the government funded Home Medicines Service is limited to eligible patients (in self-isolation or at risk of COVID-19) and can be accessed once a month only. This service is available at participating pharmacies only.</p>	
<p>For Schedule 8 and Schedule 4 drugs of dependence (<i>benzodiazepines, anabolic steroids, phentermine</i>). A pharmacist may dispense Schedule 8 medicine or Schedule 4 drug of dependence in accordance with a verbal instruction from the prescriber in an emergency. <i>The prescriber is responsible for forwarding a paper prescription to the pharmacy as soon as practicable, confirming the instruction.</i></p>	
<p>SafeScript Prescribers and pharmacists must take all reasonable steps to check SafeScript when prescribing or dispensing monitored medicines</p>	
<p>Information and practice flyers on Victorian legislative amendments is available on the Medicines and Poisons Regulations website</p>	
<p>More information on COVID-19 Supply of Pharmaceutical Benefits Amendment Special Arrangement 24 September 2020</p>	