

## 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 <b>Public Health Emergency Order #4 (PHEO #4)</b> 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 6 October 2020.</p>	
<p><b>Note: Schedule 8 and Schedule 4 drugs of dependence</b> (includes <i>benzodiazepines, anabolic steroids, phentermine</i>) <b>are not covered</b> by these amendments</p>	
<p><b>Key requirements</b></p>	
Prescribers	Pharmacists
<p>If a digital image of a prescription is transmitted to the pharmacy:  <b>Do not send the paper prescription to the pharmacy or patient</b> 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). <b>Repeats</b> can be ordered, but must be held and supplied by the same pharmacy that received &amp; 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.  <b>Repeat</b> 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 <b>must include the prescriber’s signature</b> (hand written or valid digital signature) and barcode if appropriate.</p>	<p>Cannot dispense if no signature.</p>
<p><b>Authority Prescriptions</b> 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 <b>PHEO #4</b>.</p>	<p>Record in patient notes that supply on digital image occurred under <b>PHEO #4</b>.</p>
<p><b>Retain hard copy of original signed prescription</b> in a safe and secure way for 2 years, retrievable for audit.</p>	<p><b>Retain a copy of the digital image</b> in a safe and secure way for 2 years, retrievable for audit.</p>
<p><b>Delivery:</b> 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><b>For Schedule 8 and Schedule 4 drugs of dependence</b> (benzodiazepines, anabolic steroids, phentermine).                  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. The prescriber must forward a paper prescription to the pharmacy as soon as practicable, confirming the instruction.</p>	
<p><b>SafeScript</b> Prescribers and pharmacists must take all reasonable steps to check SafeScript when prescribing or dispensing monitored medicines</p>	
<p><b>Information and practice flyers</b> on Victorian legislative amendments is available on the <a href="#">Medicines and Poisons Regulations</a> website</p>	
<p>More information on COVID-19 Supply of <a href="#">Pharmaceutical Benefits Amendment Special Arrangement</a> 7 April 2020</p>	

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