



GUIDANCE

COVID-19 – Home Delivery of Medicines

31 March 2020

This guide complements existing pharmacy policies and procedures that meet quality care accreditation requirements, and informs the development and implementation of your pharmacy's COVID-19 home delivery service. Pharmacies should also ensure home delivery services are consistent with guidance provided by the Pharmacy Board of Australia and the PSA's Dispensing Practice Guidelines on the indirect supply of medicines. These services should abide by the current relevant protocols appropriate to the containment and management of COVID-19 as issued by each State and Territory¹.

1. Establishing the service

How will the service work? Considerations that may assist in your decision on whether you will offer a home delivery service may include

- Availability of staff to manage administration, including the coordination of deliveries, payments and claiming
- How often can home deliveries be carried out (e.g., daily, twice-weekly, once-weekly, on the same day each week, etc.)?
- Who will deliver the medicines to your patients' homes (staff, a courier service, other arrangement)? Ensure that delivery persons are not in a high-risk or vulnerable category.
- If it's your staff, will they be using a business or personal vehicle?
- Ensure current driver's licence, appropriate insurances, how staff car expenses will be managed, (e.g., understanding vehicle compliance obligations and appropriate insurance coverage implementation)
- If it's an external provider, undertake necessary due diligence prior to engagement, including relevant licence checks, and contract reviews and enactment
- Ensure relevant insurances are in place, including during medicines in transit

Pharmacies are advised that the *FIP Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2/ COVID-19 pandemic: Information and Guidelines for Pharmacists and the Pharmacy Workforce*² encourages pharmacies that can offer a medicines home delivery service to do so.

¹ Guidelines for dispensing of medicines; Pharmacy Board of Australia; Sep 2015; www.pharmacyboard.gov.au

² <https://www.fip.org/files/content/priority-areas/coronavirus/Coronavirus-guidance-update-ENGLISH.pdf>

2. Developing the service

How will the service be developed and implemented? Considerations that may assist in your decision include:

- Development of a COVID-19 home delivery procedure, such as roles and responsibilities, patient eligibility, patient consent, administration of payment, potential use of workflow management platforms, designated pharmacy areas for delivery storage, how medicines will be secured during transit, etc.
- Development of policies, e.g., personal vehicles expenses reimbursement, protection against COVID-19 for staff and patients, if patient can provide prescriptions or return of goods or cash payment on delivery, certain radius of the pharmacy that deliveries are accepted
- Develop a delivery register to manage service and maintain records, e.g., patient details, number of items, payment received, who delivering and when, items received, issues and feedback, etc.
- Determine the true cost to your business and cost to the patient; consider staff costs, car expenses, PPE, as well as administration time in coordinating and managing, purchase of secure bags, Esky, envelopes, and courier costs, additional requirements to prevent transmission of COVID-19 (determine whether your pharmacy is eligible for Government or other body-funded service)
- Depending on the method of delivery, determine which medicines can/cannot be included in the delivery service, e.g., temperature-sensitive medicines, S8 medicines, etc.
- Train staff on new service, e.g., all relevant procedures and policies, as well as state- and territory-specific COVID-19 protocols, delivery register, vehicle log book, Department of Health COVID-19 Infection Control Training, etc.
- Develop supporting materials for patients and local GPs, e.g., FAQs, flyers, website content, etc.

3. Implementing the service

How will you implement the service? Considerations include

- How will you accept prescription medicine requests (scripts on file, ePrescriptions, via phone, fax or scan from doctor or patient, with original to follow, emergency or Continued Dispensing supply)?
- How will patients register for the service and eligibility check (consider confirmation of patient details, including address, contact number, up-to-date Medicare and entitlements, consent, ability to achieve secure delivery while minimising exposure to COVID-19)? Will you deliver to apartments, residential aged care facilities?
- How will you collect payment from the patient (e.g., EFTPOS only prior to delivery)?
- How will you ensure that patient receives medicine counselling (e.g., phone call, provision of CMI)?
- How will you ensure medicines are packed appropriately? Considerations include temperature-sensitive medicines (e.g., storing in dispensary refrigerator and packaging prior to delivery to maintain cold-chain, medicines with special handling requirements, storing S8 medicines in safe until delivery, etc.).

- How will you maintain patient confidentiality (consider secure packaging in opaque material to prevent any visibility of contents, securely sealed, labelled clearly, including any special delivery requirements)?
- How will patient be notified of time, date of delivery, and who will be delivering the item?
- How will you and/or the patient ensure delivery and have sufficient evidence that it has been received by the patient or authorised person (e.g., if no signature by patient, will it be a photo of the medicine package at time of delivery at front door)? Delivery person should avoid direct contact with the patient and their personal objects; items can be left at the door or another agreed designated location so that deliverer may maintain a physical distance, while visually ensuring that the medicines are collected by the patient or authorised person.
- How will you ensure that staff/delivery driver avoids exposure to COVID-19 (considerations include PPE, hand sanitiser, adhering to COVID-10 infection control protocols, e.g., physical distancing, etc.)?
- How will you ensure that the delivery register and vehicle log is regularly maintained and up-to-date?

4. Regular review of service

How will you ensure that the delivery of the service continues to meet COVID-19 containment and isolation protocols?

- Ensure you keep up-to-date on latest recommendations; containment and isolation protocols continue to change as the spread of the infection grows and our knowledge of the virus increases, e.g., physical distancing, use of PPE, disinfection protocols, etc.
- Be aware of other delivery services in the area that you can leverage off to improve efficiencies, or volunteer organisations that you may engage to support your patients accessing their medicine in their homes, e.g., Red Cross
- Review and update policies and procedures where relevant
- Re-train and update staff as appropriate