



FACT SHEET NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN

A GUIDE FOR PHARMACISTS

Interim arrangements for prescriptions for supply of medicines: Supporting telehealth patients and healthcare professionals

As part of the National Health Plan, Electronic Prescribing is being fast tracked. Work to upgrade healthcare providers' clinical software is well underway, and is expected to be ready by May 2020 (refer to the fact sheet [here](#)). In addition, there are immediate options available for patients to receive medicines via telehealth services.

Medical services for patients confined to their homes



Doctors, nurses and mental health professionals are able to deliver bulk-billed services via telehealth until 30 September 2020 via phone or video conferencing. More information on telehealth can be found [here](#).

Interim arrangements for prescriptions process to support telehealth services



STEP 1

Prescribers will create a paper prescription during a telehealth consultation.

This prescription will need to be signed as normal or using a valid digital signature.



STEP 2

The prescriber may fax a copy of the signed prescription to the patient's pharmacy of choice, or the prescriber can create a clear copy of the entire prescription (a digital image such as a photo or pdf including the barcode where applicable) to send on to the patient's pharmacy of choice via email or text message.

(Contact details for the pharmacy of the patient's choice can be found on [Find a Pharmacy](#))



STEP 3

Prescribers will then email, text or fax the digital copy directly to the pharmacy of the patient's choice.

The prescriber will be required to retain the paper prescription for a period of 2 years for audit and compliance purposes. The pharmacist will be required to keep the copy of the prescription for 2 years.

PBS Claiming Arrangements

The pharmacist can dispense and claim from the copy of the prescription sent through by the prescriber.

Supply of Medicines to Patients



Once the pharmacy has received the copy of the prescription via fax, email or text, the pharmacy may communicate with the patient to arrange for payment and to confirm arrangements for collection of the medicines or home delivery.

Signing for receipt of a prescription

Under the interim arrangement, patients are not required to sign to acknowledge receipt of supply if it is not practical for them to do so. The pharmacist may sign on behalf of the patient unless it is not practical for them to do so.

! While the vast majority of healthcare providers do the right thing, fraudulent and inappropriate practice against Medicare and the PBS should be reported to the Department of Health on 1800 314 808. More information can be found [here](#).

Repeats

The pharmacist may create a repeat authorisation and attach it to a print out of the digital image of the prescription, this should be held in the pharmacy for subsequent supply of the medicine.

Existing Prescriptions



Patients with existing paper prescriptions or repeats who are confined to their homes during COVID-19 will need to ask someone to visit the pharmacy on their behalf with the paper prescription. If this

is not possible, patients can seek a new prescription from the prescriber and follow the steps above.

Please note: Medicines in Schedule 8 and Appendix D in the Poisons Standard are not part of this interim arrangement and are to be supplied under the current prescribing arrangements.

Please note: these interim arrangements are temporary and will cease in accordance with the COVID-19 National Health Plan telehealth measure (currently ceasing on 30 September 2020).