



Fact Sheet – National Health Plan A Guide for Prescribers

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

31/03/2021

As part of the National Health Plan, the Australian Government has fast tracked Electronic Prescribing. The national rollout of electronic prescribing is occurring and the update of the clinical software by healthcare providers is well underway (more information is available [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 services via telehealth via phone or video conferencing. More information on telehealth is available [here](#).

Interim arrangements for prescriptions process to support telehealth services

Step 1

As a prescriber, you will still create a paper prescription during a telehealth consultation. This prescription will need to be signed by the prescriber as normal or using a valid digital signature.

Step 2

You can then create a clear copy of the entire prescription to send to the patient's pharmacy of choice via email, text message or fax. The copy can be a digital image such as a photo or pdf including the barcode where applicable.

If your patient prefers to receive the legal paper prescription you will need to mail it to them.

(Contact details for the pharmacy of the patient's choice is available at <https://www.findapharmacy.com.au>)

Step 3

Send the copy via fax, email, or text directly to the patient's pharmacy of choice.

The law requires you to retain the paper prescription for a period of 2 years for audit and compliance purposes.

Please note: Medicines in Schedule 8 and Schedule 4 Appendix D in the Poisons Standard are not part of this interim arrangement. They are to be supplied under the current prescribing arrangements.

Medicine delivery services

Once the patient's chosen pharmacy has received the digital copy of the prescription, the pharmacy will deliver medicines to the address on the prescription. Prescribers should check that they have the correct address for patients during the telehealth consultation.

Existing prescriptions and repeats

Patients confined to their homes during COVID-19 with paper prescriptions or repeats will need someone to visit the pharmacy on their behalf with the paper prescription. If this is not possible, patients can seek a new prescription and follow the steps above.

Please note: these interim arrangements are temporary and will cease on 30 September 2021.