About the Monitored Medicines Standard

Monitored Medicines Standard

The *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019* provides for the development of departmental standards which outline the minimum requirements for safe and effective management of regulated substances, such as monitored medicines.

The standards have all been developed with input from relevant industries or professional groups and are based on the principles of best practice in each of the standard areas.

Each standard has outcome measures and states the minimum requirements to meet each of those outcome measures.

What is the Monitored Medicines Standard?

The Monitored Medicines Standard (MMS) is a legal instrument which outlines the minimum requirements prescribers and dispensers must comply with to demonstrate the steps they have taken to ensure the prescribing and dispensing of monitored medicines for patients is clinically justified, safe and appropriate.

The aim of the standard is to:

- Improve – patient safety and wellbeing
- Reduce – patient harms from the use of monitored medicines

Which medicines does the MMS apply to?

The new *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019* refers to a list of 'monitored medicines' that have a recognised therapeutic use but may also present a high risk of physical, mental and social harms. This includes:

- All schedule 8 medicines (e.g. opioids, alprazolam, nabiximols, dexamphetamine)
- The following schedule 4 medicines:
  - All benzodiazepines
  - All codeine containing products
  - Tramadol
  - Zolpidem
  - Zopiclone
  - Gabapentin
  - Pregabalin
  - Quetiapine

Who must comply with the MMS?

The following health practitioners will be required to comply with the MMS: Medical practitioners

- Pharmacists
- Nurse practitioners
- Endorsed midwives
- Dentists
- Podiatric surgeons and endorsed podiatrists
- Physician assistants

When does a health practitioner have to comply with the MMS?

A **prescriber must comply** with the MMS when prescribing a monitored medicine for dispensing or giving a treatment dose to a patient. This includes writing a prescription for dispensing at a pharmacy or writing a prescription for another health practitioner to give a 'treatment dose' to a patient e.g. a medical practitioner directing a registered nurse, in writing or orally, to give a patient 2 days' supply of a monitored medicine to take home on discharge.

A **prescriber does not have to comply** with the MMS when prescribing for administration e.g. when writing a monitored medicine on a medication chart.

A **dispenser must comply** with the MMS when dispensing any monitored medicine prescription, regardless of where the prescriber is based e.g. the pharmacist must comply with the standard if the prescription is written from an interstate medical practitioner. Where there are multiple dispensers involved in dispensing a monitored medicine for a patient, the dispenser who makes the dispensing record must comply with the MMS.

How will prescribers and dispensers know if they have met the requirements of the MMS?

The MMS provides prescribers and dispensers with the minimum requirements to meet each of the outcome measures in the MMS. Prescribers and dispensers should ensure they document the strategies they have used to meet the outcome measures.

The MMS also identifies high-risk clinical scenarios where there may be a risk of monitored medicine-related patient harm and requires prescribers and dispensers to document what risk mitigation strategies they have put in place to reduce potential patient harms.

To support understanding and assist health practitioners in complying with the MMS, Queensland Health has prepared a guide, the Monitored Medicines Standard Companion Document (see link below)

How will compliance with the MMS be regulated?

Several compliance tools will be used to ensure prescribers and dispensers are complying with the MMS. This might include random audits whereby prescribers or dispensers may be asked to provide evidence of their compliance. Incidents resulting in adverse outcomes to patients from the use of monitored medicines will be reviewed and/or investigated to determine the health practitioner's compliance with legislated requirements.

Further information can be found at:

Monitored Medicines Standard – https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/licences/medicines-poisons.

QScript Learning Portal – www.qscriptlearn.health.qld.gov.au contains a series of eLearning modules, videos and factsheets to help orient you to QScript and enhance your clinical practice with monitored medicines.