Accessing emergency adrenaline and asthma medicines from pharmacies

March 2018

Target audience: Education and child care services, approved first-aiders

Background

Education and child care services and approved first-aiders need access to medicines for treating anaphylaxis and asthma in emergency situations. For some education and child care service providers, it is also a legal requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland)* to have a suitably equipped first aid kit.

In Queensland the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 (HDPR) places controls on the use and supply of these medicines to ensure that they are used safely and effectively, by people with appropriate training. Certain people are authorised to administer medicines under this legislation including suitably qualified staff at child care centres and schools and approved first-aiders.

What is the effect of March 2018 changes to the legislation?

Previously, child care services and approved first-aiders had to purchase medicine to treat anaphylaxis from a licensed pharmaceutical wholesaler. The legislation now allows a pharmacist to sell adrenaline (commonly known by the brand name Epipen) and salbutamol and terbutaline (asthma reliever medicines) for the purpose of stocking and maintaining a first-aid kit.

A pharmacist may only sell these emergency medicines to people who have the authority to purchase them. Therefore, a person with authority to purchase (see below) must provide the pharmacist with evidence of their authority to purchase. Suitable evidence of a person’s authority to purchase could include a letter from a child care centre or school nominating the person as an approved purchaser on behalf of the centre or school. Alternatively, a first aider may provide a completion certificate of an approved asthma management course or a copy of their Queensland Health approval.

What specifically has changed in the legislation?

The following people can now purchase Schedule 3 salbutamol and terbutaline (blue/grey asthma reliever medicine) and Schedule 3 adrenaline in a pre-loaded auto-injector from a pharmacy:

- a person who has completed an asthma management course approved by the Department of Health for use in asthma first aid (section 256B of the HDPR);
- a person who holds an approval to administer these medicines issued under section 18(1) of the HDPR (for example first aid officers at universities);
- a principal of an educational institute (or a person nominated by the principal);
- a Queensland approved provider of a QEC approved service (or a person appointed as a supervisor for the service under the *Education and Care Services Act 2013*);
- an approved provider of an education and care service under the *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland)* (or a person nominated as a supervisor by the approved provider).
Recommendations

- Disseminate this fact sheet to all relevant services and employees.
- Ensure employees are aware of the relevant sections of the HDPR (s256A, s256B, s277) and how they apply to them.
- Ensure individual asthma management and anaphylaxis plans are in place where appropriate (e.g. in schools and child care facilities).
- It is recommended that organisations conduct a risk assessment to determine the required quantity and suitable locations of adrenaline auto-injectors and blue/grey reliever medication and spacers.
- Medication expiry dates should be checked regularly.

For more information

For information about approved asthma management courses and using asthma relievers in providing first aid see these fact sheets:

- [Asthma management courses](#)
- [Use of blue/grey reliever medication](#) to provide asthma first aid at schools, workplaces and community events

For further information, please contact Medicines Regulation and Quality at: [MRQ@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MRQ@health.qld.gov.au)