This fact sheet informs prescribers about amended prescribing and dispensing requirements for hydroxychloroquine.

**Background**

To ensure the continued availability of hydroxychloroquine for therapeutic treatment and clinical trials, the Commonwealth Department of Health has published an amendment to the Poisons Standard - the **Poisons Standard Amendment (Hydroxychloroquine) Instrument 2020**.

To give effect to the Commonwealth decision in Queensland, a Public Health Direction - **Prescribing and Dispensing of Hydroxychloroquine Direction** (‘the Direction’) - has been made pursuant to the powers under section 362B of the **Public Health Act 2005 (QLD)**. The Direction applies from 7 April 2020 until the end of the declared public health emergency, unless otherwise revoked or replaced.

**Prescribing**

Under the Direction, only the following medical or dental practitioners are authorised to make a prescription initiating treatment with hydroxychloroquine:

1. A medical practitioner who holds specialist registration in the specialty area of:
   - Dermatology
   - Intensive care medicine
   - Paediatrics and child health
   - Physician
   - Emergency medicine
2. A medical practitioner who is training to prepare for specialist registration in one of the above-mentioned specialty areas and who is working under the supervision of medical practitioner who holds the requisite specialist registration.
3. A dentist who holds specialist registration in oral medicine.

Prescribers not listed above may, within the scope of their usual practice, prescribe hydroxychloroquine for the treatment of a chronic condition only if the prescriber is continuing treatment that was *initiated* by a medical practitioner or dentist who is authorised to make a prescription initiating treatment, as above.
Initiating treatment

A prescriber who may initiate treatment with hydroxychloroquine may do so either by prescribing the medicine for a patient who has not previously been prescribed the medicine or by giving advice to another prescriber to prescribe the medicine. A prescriber who is acting on the advice of another prescriber when prescribing hydroxychloroquine must keep documented evidence of the advice given in the patient’s medical record.

Hospital inpatients

The Direction does not prevent a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner from providing an oral or written instruction to administer continuing treatment with hydroxychloroquine to a person who is a hospital inpatient.

Clinical trials

The Direction does not prevent a prescriber initiating treatment with hydroxychloroquine in accordance with a research protocol for a clinical trial that has been approved by a human research ethics committee registered with the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Dispensing hydroxychloroquine

There are also additional obligations that apply under the Direction in respect to dispensing. Prior to dispensing or supplying hydroxychloroquine a dispenser must:

- ensure that a prescription for hydroxychloroquine treatment is made by a prescriber who is authorised to prescribe the medicine under the Direction; or
- take reasonable steps to confirm that a person for whom hydroxychloroquine has been prescribed has a therapeutic need for continuing treatment of a chronic condition; or
- if supplying for an approved clinical trial, ensure that supply is in accordance with the research protocol for the trial.

For further information please contact:

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