

Offence to self-prescribe and/or self-administer high-risk medicines

Section 40 – Medicines and Poisons Act 2019

Under section 40(1) of the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019* (MPA), it is an offence for a person to self-prescribe a 'high-risk medicine', unless the person has a reasonable excuse.

Further, it is an offence under section 40(2) of the MPA for a person who is authorised to deal with a high-risk medicine to self-administer a high-risk medicine unless:

- someone else who is authorised to prescribe the medicine has prescribed the medicine for the person's treatment; or
- someone else who is authorised to give a treatment dose of the medicine has given the medicine to the person for the person's treatment; or
- the person has a reasonable excuse.

Section 40(3) of the MPA states that a high-risk medicine means a medicine prescribed by regulation to be a **high-risk** medicine.

Schedule 2, Part 2 of the *Medicines and Poisons Regulation 2021* (the MPMR) defines a '**high-risk medicines**' as:

All Schedule 8 medicines

The following Schedule 4 medicines:

benzodiazepines

codeine

gabapentin

pregabalin

quetiapine

tramadol

zolpidem

zopiclone.

These medicines are also '**monitored medicines**' captured in QScript.

Self-prescribing and prescriber bag purchase orders

Certain medicines are provided to prescribers without charge through the [Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme \(PBS\)](#), allowing them to be supplied to patients free in an emergency. Some prescribers may also privately purchase stock of certain medicines for use with and/or supply to patients. In both cases, these are 'prescriber bag' supplies.

Requests for stock of medicine for a prescriber bag, whether supplied under the PBS or not, are considered a 'purchase order' under the MPA rather than a 'prescription'. These medicines must be purchased from a supplier using a purchase order i.e. in a transaction that does not involve prescribing or dispensing the medicines. A [purchase order template](#) can be found on the Queensland Health website.

When completing a prescriber bag purchase order, the pharmacist is *supplying* or *selling* the medicine, rather than *dispensing* the medicine for a particular patient. Some prescriber bag supplies include **high-risk medicines/monitored medicines**. When prescriber bag purchase orders are processed in dispensing software correctly, these high-risk medicines records do not transmit through to QScript because they are automatically filtered out.

It is important that prescriber bag purchase orders are processed appropriately, otherwise the **high-risk** medicine record may inadvertently flow through to QScript and make it incorrectly appear as though the prescriber has self-prescribed.

- **Prescribers:** You may wish to discuss this issue with your pharmacist to ensure your prescriber bag purchase orders are not inadvertently recorded into QScript to appear as 'self-prescribed' prescriptions.
- **Pharmacists:** Because different dispensing software systems have different ways of recording prescriber bag purchase orders, Queensland Health is unable to provide specific advice on how to make these records in your software so they do not appear as 'self-prescribed' prescriptions. If your software user manual does not cover this topic, please check in with your software vendor for guidance.