Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996

Drug Therapy Protocol – Nurse Practitioners

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Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996
Drug Therapy Protocol – Nurse Practitioners

This drug therapy protocol, made under sections 67(4)(b), 175(5)(b) and 263(5)(b) of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 states the circumstances and conditions under which a nurse practitioner is authorised to prescribe, give a written or oral instruction to administer or supply, or administer or supply scheduled medicines to the extent necessary to practise as a nurse practitioner.

Conditions and circumstances of this drug therapy protocol

1. A nurse practitioner may only act under this Drug Therapy Protocol if the nurse practitioner’s practice scope has been defined in writing and published by the Department, and that the defined practice scope is current. This defined practice scope is current for a maximum period of three (3) years.

2. A nurse practitioner’s written practice scope must be re-defined after three (3) years or sooner if there are changes to the nurse practitioner’s practice scope.

3. A nurse practitioner acting under this Drug Therapy Protocol is required to keep a copy of the practice scope for the purposes of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 and may be required to be produced to an inspector under section 153N of the Health Act 1937.

4. A nurse practitioner acting under this Drug Therapy Protocol must not prescribe, give a written or oral instruction, supply or administer scheduled medicines that have not been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

5. The actions of a nurse practitioner must at all times be in accordance with the Drug Therapy Protocol and:
   5.1. in line with clinical guidelines that are relevant to the conditions treated as part of the nurse practitioner’s practice scope, where guidelines are developed with appropriate multidisciplinary editorial and clinical governance (relevant clinical guidelines).
   5.2. consistent with the National Policy on the Quality Use of Medicines.

6. A nurse practitioner acting under this Drug Therapy Protocol must not prescribe, give a written or oral instruction, supply or administer a scheduled medicine outside the terms of the manufacturer’s approved product information (‘off-label’) unless the nurse practitioner is satisfied there is a sufficient evidence base to demonstrate the safety and efficacy of using the scheduled medicine.

7. The nurse practitioner must be aware that practising within the Drug Therapy Protocol does not relieve that person of their legal responsibility or accountability for that person’s actions and may not provide immunity in case of negligence.

8. Where relevant to the person’s practice scope, a nurse practitioner may obtain sufficient stock of the scheduled medicines from a pharmacy or licensed wholesaler by placing a purchase order as described under Chapter 2, Part 5 and Chapter 3, Part 5 of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996.

9. Where a scheduled drug is supplied to a person by a nurse practitioner, the primary medicine container must be labelled to the same standards as required under section 85

1 A nurse practitioner means a registered nurse whose registration is endorsed under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 as being qualified to practice as a nurse practitioner.
and for dispensed medicines under section 198 in the *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996*.

10. Where a Controlled Drug is obtained, administered or supplied by a nurse practitioner, the nurse practitioner must keep appropriate records as required under section 111 of the *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996* to enable reconciliation of stock obtained, used and stock on hand. Where a Restricted Drug is supplied by a nurse practitioner, the nurse practitioner must keep records to the same standards as described under section 207 (2-5) of the *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996*.

11. When a nurse practitioner obtains and possesses scheduled medicines, Controlled Drugs must be stored as specified under section 119(1) and, when a nurse practitioner is at a place other than where that person practices, to the same standards as required under section 119 (4-5) and Restricted Drugs must be stored as required under section 211 of the *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996*.

12. A nurse practitioner’s authority to act under this Drug Therapy Protocol may be suspended or cancelled pursuant to Chapter 1, Part 5, Division 4 of the *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996*.

**Certification**

Certified at Brisbane on this 4th day of April, 2014 to take effect from 4 April 2014.

Dr Jeannette Young  
**Chief Health Officer**  
**Department of Health**