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Dear Associate Professor Hespe

**Urgent use medications at NSW residential care facilities**

I am pleased to advise that changes to the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 (the Regulation) on 7 December 2018 mean that all NSW residential care facilities (RCFs), being residential care services approved under the Commonwealth *Aged Care Act 1997*, may now hold stock of certain Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medications for urgent use.

Previously only those RCFs classified as a 'nursing home' under the Regulation could hold stock of urgent use medications.

The NSW Health website: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pharmaceutical/Pages/residential-care-facilities.aspx> provides:

- information on the procurement and use of urgent use medications
- the list of Schedule 3 and 4 urgent use medications which may be held in stock.

**Schedule 4 medications and morphine ampoules (Schedule 8) for urgent use**

The changes that apply to those RCFs classified as 'nursing homes' are:

- an increase in the range of Schedule 4 medications which can be stocked to commence end of life treatment
- for antimicrobial stewardship, restricting the number of different oral antibiotics to 2 (two)
- increasing the number of morphine sulfate pentahydrate ampoules from 5 (five) to 30 (thirty)
- removal of pethidine hydrochloride ampoules for urgent use. Note that pethidine hydrochloride ampoules may be used until the current stock is exhausted.

Protocols approved by the RCF's Medication Advisory Committee must determine which of the available Schedule 4 medications are needed for urgent treatment, as well as provide information for registered nurses on the handling, administration and recording of the medications.

Morphine ampoules must be stored in the Schedule 8 drug storage unit, and all transactions recorded in a drug register.

The medications must only be administered:

- by a registered nurse on the direction of an authorised prescriber (that is, a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or dentist) either in writing or by telephone, email or fax, or
- by an authorised prescriber on site at the RCF.

A record of administration of the medication must be made on the resident's medication chart or record. The urgent use medication must be withdrawn from use and placed back in storage when the resident's dispensed pack of the medication is received.

### **Schedule 2 and 3 medications**

RCFs may also hold in stock any Schedule 2 medications and Schedule 3 adrenaline (epinephrine) injection (in ampoules or EpiPen) and salbutamol metered aerosols.

The list of Schedule 2 and 3 medications for use at the RCF must be approved by the RCF's Medication Advisory Committee. Written protocols for each medication must provide sufficient detail for the RCF staff member to make informed decisions prior to administration, include a procedure for medication incident and adverse drug reaction reporting, and be reviewed every twelve months.

### **General requirements**

All urgent use medications must be obtained from a retail pharmacist on a signed and dated order from the Director of Nursing or the residential care facility manager where there is no Director of Nursing.

The medications must be obtained from the retail pharmacist in the manufacturer's original pack and administered to the resident directly from that pack. A written procedure for general stock control is required to ensure that stock rotation and expiry date checking of the medications occurs.

Please forward this information to RCF sector organisations as you see fit.

The Ministry of Health will review whether any additional changes to the regulation of medicines management at RCFs is necessary and appropriate, having regard to the relevant evidence and recommendations at the upcoming Royal Commission into aged care services. All stakeholders will continue to be kept informed of the review through their respective organisations.

If you require any further information contact Martin Power, Principal Pharmaceutical Officer by telephone on (02) 9391 9908 or email at [MOH-PharmaceuticalServices@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:MOH-PharmaceuticalServices@health.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



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