

Pharmacotherapy transfers out of Victoria

Key messages

- It is possible for a Victorian prescriber to write a prescription for pharmacotherapy to be dispensed in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. However, interstate regulatory groups still need 2–3 weeks' notice of a transfer.
- In the Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia, pharmacists may not dispense pharmacotherapy prescriptions issued by a prescriber in another state. If you need to transfer a patient, you must arrange a transfer.

Pharmacotherapy transfers to the ACT, NSW, Queensland and South Australia

After the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) was introduced, it became possible for prescriptions written by Victorian prescribers for Schedule 8 poisons (including methadone or buprenorphine for pharmacotherapy, or opioid replacement therapy [ORT]) to be dispensed in:

- the Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Queensland
- South Australia.

This is dependent on meeting the interstate requirements. For instance, some pharmacies interstate will not be able to dispense prescriptions for ORT unless the prescription has been authorised in that state or territory.

Refer to the relevant interstate regulatory group for further information on any additional interstate requirements.

Please be advised that interstate regulatory groups generally require at least 2–3 weeks' notice for interstate transfers. The following subsections provide the contact information required to notify and seek approval for an interstate prescription.

Australian Capital Territory

Pharmaceutical Services Branch (ACT)

Phone: (02) 6207 3974

Fax: (02) 6205 0997

Alcohol and Drug Program

(24-hour intake and assistance line)

Phone: (02) 6207 9977

Opiate Treatment Service

(clinic nurses who arrange transfers)

Phone: (02) 6244 2591 (reception)

(02) 6205 1000 or 02 6244 3781

(business hours only)

Fax: (02) 6244 4622

Email: adp.ots@act.gov.au

Note that Victorian prescribers require an authorisation from the ACT Pharmaceutical Services Branch (PSB) to prescribe ORT to a patient for dosing in the ACT. The approval number issued by PSB must be written on the prescription. The number of takeaways to be prescribed may also require prior approval in the ACT. A temporary transfer may be for up to 4 weeks.

Source: [**Pharmaceutical Services Branch \(ACT\)**](#) (August 2010)

New South Wales

Pharmaceutical Services Branch (NSW)

Phone: (02) 9391 9944

Fax: (02) 9424 5860

Note that Victorian prescribers require an authorisation from NSW Pharmaceutical Services Branch (PSB) to prescribe ORT to a patient for dosing in NSW. The NSW ORT guidelines stipulate that prescriptions for ORT are to be provided directly to the dosing point and not handed to patients. A temporary transfer may be for up to 4 weeks.

Source: [**Pharmaceutical Services Branch \(NSW\)**](#) (August 2010)

Queensland

Medicines Regulation and Quality

Phone: (07) 3328 9890

Fax: (07) 3328 9821

Email: mrq@health.qld.gov.au

Note that Victorian prescribers require an authorisation from Medicines Regulation and Quality to prescribe ORT to a patient for dosing in Queensland. A prescription for ORT written on a standard

National Health Scheme (NHS) prescription is not valid in Queensland. A specialised 'Written instruction' form must be completed by the prescriber. A temporary transfer may be for up to 4 weeks.

Source: [Medicines Regulation and Quality](#) (August 2010)

South Australia

Drugs of Dependence Unit (SA)

Phone: 1300 652 584

Fax: 1300 658 447

Email: dassadrugs of dependenceunit@health.sa.gov.au

(Monday to Friday – 9 am to 5 pm CST)

Note that there is no additional requirement for a Victorian prescriber to obtain an authorisation from the Drugs of Dependence Unit (SA) to prescribe ORT to a patient for dosing in SA.

Source: [Drugs of Dependence Unit \(SA\)](#) (October 2010)

Pharmacotherapy transfers to the Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia

Prescriptions written by Victorian prescribers for methadone or buprenorphine for ORT cannot be dispensed in the Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia. These states or territories have legislated to prevent prescriptions for methadone or buprenorphine for ORT being valid unless the prescriber is practising in that state or territory.

To transfer an ORT patient to these states or territories, contact the relevant state authority for information on what to do.

Please be advised that interstate regulatory groups generally require at least 2–3 weeks' notice for interstate transfers.

Northern Territory

For patients to be based in Darwin

Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs (TADS)

Phone: (08) 8922 8399

For patients to be based in Alice Springs

Alcohol and Other Drugs Central Australia (ADSCA)

Phone: (08) 8951 7580

Source: [Medicines and Poisons Control \(NT\)](#) (August 2010)

Tasmania

Pharmaceutical Services Branch (PSB) (Tasmania) and the Nurse Unit Manager at Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS)

Phone: (03) 6166 0400

Fax: (03) 6233 3904

Note that Tasmanian prescribers must comply with Tasmanian ORT guidelines. Prescribers cannot prescribe doses above methadone 120 mg/day, and cannot provide split dosing. No takeaway doses can be prescribed if a patient transfers to the care of a Tasmanian prescriber for less than 3 months.

Source: [**Pharmaceutical Services Branch \(Tas\)**](#) (August 2010)

Western Australia

Community Pharmacotherapy Program

The Community Pharmacotherapy Program (CPP) coordinates the transfer of patients to and from Western Australia. Prescribers wanting to arrange the interstate transfer of a patient need to liaise with the CPP.

Phone: (08) 9219 1907

Fax: (08) 9471 0444

(Monday to Friday – 8.30 am to 4.30 pm WST)

Source: [**Pharmaceutical Services Branch \(WA\)**](#) (October 2017)

Contact details

Victorian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Program

Drugs Policy and Reform

Department of Health and Human Services

+61 3 9096 5057

[**50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, 3000 Victoria, Australia**](#)

Page last reviewed: 08 Oct 2015

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au:443/public-health/drugs-and-poisons/pharmacotherapy/pharmacotherapy-transfers-out-of-victoria>

[**Privacy Statement**](#) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au:443/privacy>

[**Copyright Notice**](#) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au:443/copyright>

[**Disclaimer Notice**](#) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au:443/disclaimer>

Government of Victoria, Australia

© Copyright State of Victoria 2018

summary: Interstate transfers

Australian Capital Territory

Pharmaceutical Services Branch (ACT)

Phone: (02) 6207 3974

Fax: (02) 6205 0997

<http://health.act.gov.au/public-information/businesses/pharmaceutical-services>

Temporary transfer < 4 weeks

Victorian prescription needs to be approved

GP or patient phones alcohol and drug services - 02 6207 9977 (list of authorised prescribers and pharmacies)

GP or patient Identifies a pharmacist

GP fills out approval request form

This is available online according to the following google-search
pharmaceutical services act

controlled medicines

application for approval to prescribe a controlled medicine

download the form

Fill it in

Tick as urgent

Await fax back

When approval is faxed back attach approval to Victorian prescription

Transfers > 4 weeks

Will need to be seen by a doctor in act

Patient to arrange appointment via alcohol and drug services - 02 6207 9977

New South Wales

Pharmaceutical Services Branch (NSW)

Phone: (02) 9391 9944

Fax: (02) 9424 5860

temporary transfer 3 months maximum duration (even though the website states 4 weeks max – this regulation has been updated)

The NSW ORT guidelines stipulate that prescriptions for ORT are to be provided directly to the dosing point and not handed to patients.

Patient advises of suburb

Doctor or patient phones opiate treatment line – 1800 642 428 to identify dosing point

Doctor fills in “Application for Temporary Interstate Transfer to NSW Opioid Treatment Program”

This form is available according to the following google search

nsw psu

Medical Practitioners nsw health

NSW opioid treatment program

Interstate transfers

Application for Temporary Interstate Transfer to NSW Opioid Treatment Program

Form filled in and faxed to 02 9424 5885

Give two working days

Authority number generated

Phone 02 9424 5921 to get the authority number

Fax prescription to dosing point

The patient never gets the prescription

Queensland

Medicines Regulation and Quality

Phone: (07) 3328 9890

Fax: (07) 3328 9821

Note that Victorian prescribers require an authorisation from Medicines Regulation and Quality to prescribe ORT to a patient for dosing in Queensland. A prescription for ORT written on a standard Victorian private prescription is not valid in Queensland. A specialised ‘Written instruction’ form must be completed by the prescriber. A temporary transfer may be for up to 3 months – web site out of date.

Victorian GP needs to obtain a qotp written instruction - this takes the place of the normal prescription

GP phones Medicines Regulations Quality 137846 to ask for a temporary transfer approval

Information requested

first date of dosing

last date of dosing

current meds

suburb

they will supply authorised pharmacy

doctor phones pharmacy

email password protected written instruction

fill out the gaps

fax back to pharmacy

Patient does not get prescription

South Australia

Drugs of Dependence Unit (SA)

Phone: 1300 652 584

Fax: 1300 658 447

Email: dassadrugsofdependenceunit@health.sa.gov.au

Note that there is no additional requirement for a Victorian prescriber to obtain an authorisation from the Drugs of Dependence Unit (SA) to prescribe ORT to a patient for dosing in SA.

Pharmacies in SA will honour s8 scripts methadone or suboxone for a period < 4 weeks

Patient / doctor needs to identify pharmacy

ADIS (alcohol and drug information service 1300 131340

Northern territory

Scripts cannot be transferred

Fill in form "NT Interstate Transfer TO OPP"

Patient needs to attend either Darwin or Alice springs for appointment with prescriber.

At least 2 week's notices.

Take away doses need to be supplied to patient by Victorian GP pending assessment in NT.

Tasmania

Pharmaceutical Services Branch (PSB) (Tasmania) and the Nurse Unit Manager at Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS)

Phone: (03) 6166 0400

Fax: (03) 6233 3904

Note that Tasmanian prescribers must comply with Tasmanian ORT guidelines. Prescribers cannot prescribe doses above methadone 120 mg/day and cannot provide split dosing. No takeaway doses can be prescribed if a patient transfers to the care of a Tasmanian prescriber for less than 3 months.

GP or patient to source prescriber and dosing point by phoning alcohol drug service - 03 6166 0786

Basically, Victorian scripts are not transferable to Tasmania.

Western Australia

Community Pharmacotherapy Program

The Community Pharmacotherapy Program (CPP) coordinates the transfer of patients to and from Western Australia. Prescribers wanting to arrange the interstate transfer of a patient need to liaise with the CPP.

Phone: (08) 9219 1907

Fax: (08) 9471 0444

(Monday to Friday – 8.30 am to 4.30 pm WST)

GP phones the number above to arrange transfers for a duration of < 30 day

GP obtains and fills out "Application to prescribe opioid substitution treatment for a temporary patient transfer to Western Australia" and GP with the help of CPP identifies a dosing point

The form is faxed back to CPP which then provides GP with HDWA authority number.

GP writes this HDWA authority number on Victorian pharmacotherapy prescription and then faxes and posts script to the dosing point.

Vic roads standards for drivers with SUD

Private standards

Drivers of cars, light rigid vehicles or motorcycles unless carrying public passengers or requiring a dangerous goods driver licence

A person is not fit to hold an unconditional licence:

- if there is an alcohol or other substance use disorder, such as substance dependence or heavy frequent alcohol or other substance use that is likely to impair safe driving. A conditional licence may be considered by the driver licensing authority subject to periodic review, taking into account the nature of the driving task and information provided by the treating doctor as to whether the following criteria are met:
- the person is involved in a treatment program and has been in remission* for at least one month; and
- there is an absence of cognitive impairments relevant to driving; and
- there is absence of end-organ effects that impact on driving (as described elsewhere in this publication).

* Remission is attained when there is abstinence from use of impairing substance/s or where substance use has reduced in frequency to the point where it is unlikely to cause impairment. Remission may be confirmed by biological monitoring for presence of drugs.

Commercial standards

Drivers of heavy vehicles, public passenger vehicles or requiring a dangerous goods driver

A person is not fit to hold an unconditional licence:

- if there is an alcohol or other substance use disorder, such as substance dependence or heavy frequent alcohol use or other substance use that is likely to impair safe driving.

A conditional licence may be considered by the driver licensing authority subject to periodic review, taking into account the nature of the driving task and information provided by an appropriate specialist (such as an addiction medicine specialist or addiction psychiatrist) as to whether the following criteria are met:

- the person is involved in a treatment program and has been in remission* for at least three months; and
- there is an absence of cognitive impairments relevant to driving; and
- there is absence of end-organ effects that impact on driving (as described elsewhere in this publication).

* Remission is attained when there is abstinence from use of impairing substance/s or where substance use has reduced in frequency to the point where it is unlikely to cause impairment. Remission may be confirmed by biological monitoring for presence of drugs.