

Background

From 1 February 2021, all new Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Repatriation PBS (RPBS) prescriptions **must** include active ingredient(s), except for:

- Hand written prescriptions and medication charts;
- Prescriptions developed using a 'free text' facility within prescribing software;
- Paper based medication charts in the residential aged care setting;
- Prescriptions for medicines with four or more ingredients; and
- Other items as determined by the Secretary.

The new medicine regulations have been put in place to ensure patients receive consistent and standardised medicines information, to support safe and appropriate use of medicines, and encourage uptake of generic and biosimilar medicines. It will give prescribers and patients a better understanding of the active ingredients in their medicines and reduce safety concerns relating to patients taking multiple doses of the same medicines.

What prescribers need to know:

- The Department has been working with the medical software industry to ensure that all prescribing software incorporates necessary changes to automate this process for prescribers
- Prescribers can still include a brand name after active ingredient(s) on prescriptions if clinically necessary for their patient, and still disallow brand substitution where required
- Prescribers must now ensure all PBS and RPBS prescriptions (in both the hospital and community settings) prepared from 1 February 2021 meet legislative requirements

What prescribers need to do:

- **Upgrade prescribing software** – make sure you have updated your software to the latest version that supports Active Ingredient Prescribing (AIP), to ensure you are generating valid prescriptions.
- **Prescription accuracy** – after printing prescriptions, ensure all details are accurate, and are PBS/RPBS compliant, and all necessary instructions and information is available for pharmacists.
- **Patient understanding** – support patients to understand the change to their prescriptions, and the active ingredients in their medicines.
- **Stay up to date** - with communications from clinical peak organisations and your software provider, and watch for any future updates to your prescribing software.

Additional information:

A range of educational and support materials have been developed concerning Active Ingredient Prescribing, including the following:

- Clinical Support Materials including an AIP User Guide, List of Medicines for Brand Consideration and List of Excluded Medicinal Items are available on the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's [website](#);
- Fact Sheets, FAQ pages and other resources for prescribers, pharmacists and consumers are available on the [NPS MedicineWise](#) and [PBS](#) websites;
- Newsletter articles are available on the [Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine](#), [Australian Medical Association](#), and [Royal Australian College of General Practitioners](#) and Pharmacy Guild websites.

Further questions can be addressed to AIPrescribing@health.gov.au