

## Fact Sheet for software vendors

# Electronic Prescribing

Changes have been made to South Australia's Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2011 to recognise an electronic prescription.

Amendments made to the Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2011 (the Poisons Regulations) give prescribers and patients in South Australia the option to use an electronic prescription as an alternative to a paper based prescription.

Electronic prescriptions form part of the broader digital health and medicines safety framework. They enable the prescribing, dispensing and claiming of medicines, without the need for a paper prescription.

Electronic prescribing is not mandatory, but provides prescribers and their patients with an alternative choice to paper based prescriptions.

## What are the requirements for electronic prescriptions?

Under the Poisons Regulations, an electronic prescription is defined as a prescription given in an *approved electronic form*; this means an electronic prescription must comply with the *Commonwealth National Health (Pharmaceutical Benefits) Regulations 2017* (the Commonwealth Regulations) in addition to requirements under the Poisons Regulations.

The Commonwealth Regulations include requirements for the electronic prescription message to contain conformance identification numbers (Conformance IDs) which verify that the clinical software used to generate an electronic prescription meets the technical conformance framework developed by the Australian Digital Health Agency. Software vendors must ensure their electronic prescribing systems include the following information in the prescription message:

- Conformance ID of prescribing software.
- Unique electronic PBS prescription number.
- Valid PBS prescriber Healthcare Provider Identifier – Individual (HPI-I), if available.
- Valid PBS prescriber Healthcare Provider Identifier – Organisation (HPI-O).

These requirements ensure the integrity and safety of the prescription data and also identify the medical practice where the prescriber prepared the electronic prescription and the approved prescriber who prepared the electronic prescription.

## Who can give an electronic prescription?

Only registered health practitioners authorised under section 18 of the [Controlled Substances Act 1984](#) (the Act) can provide an electronic prescription for a person in the ordinary course of their professional duties. This includes registered medical practitioners, nurse practitioners, dentists and some other health practitioners with prescribing rights.

Prescribers must use conformant electronic prescribing systems to generate electronic prescriptions.

## What information must be included in an electronic prescription?

Prescribers must include the following information when giving an electronic prescription:

- > the date on which the prescription is given; and
- > the prescriber's professional name, address and telephone number; and
- > the full name and address of the person for whom the prescription is intended; and
- > the name, dose form and (if relevant) the route of administration of the drug being prescribed; and



- > if applicable—the strength of the drug being prescribed; and
- > the dose of the drug to be administered to the person for whom the drug is being prescribed; and
- > the frequency at which the drug is to be administered; and
- > the total amount of the drug to be supplied each time the prescription is dispensed; and
- > the total number of times the drug may be dispensed; and
- > if the prescription is for a drug of dependence for human use—the date of birth of the person for whom the prescription is intended; and
- > and the words—
  - "For dental treatment only" if the prescriber is a dentist; or
  - "For podiatric treatment only" if the prescriber is a podiatrist

For complete details of requirements for what is to be included in an electronic prescription go to the [Poisons Regulations](#) (regulation 33).

### Can Schedule 8 medicines (drugs of dependence) be prescribed on an electronic prescription?

Schedule 8 medicines can be prescribed electronically by authorised prescribers where all legal requirements authorising the prescribing and supply of drugs of dependence are met.

Prescribers must include the **patient's date of birth** in the electronic prescription, and must keep a record of all the details required to be included in a prescription.

The electronic prescription or a copy of it must be retained for **at least 2 years**; and must be readily available for inspection by an authorised officer during that period.

Upon the request of an authorised officer, the pharmacist or medical practitioner must send a computer generated copy of the electronic prescription to the authorised officer.

Regulatory requirements for electronic prescriptions including requirements for dispensing electronic prescriptions and record keeping requirements are detailed in the Poisons Regulations, regulations 33 through 35A. These requirements are aligned with those for written prescriptions, which have not changed with the introduction of electronic prescribing.

### More Information

Contact the **Commonwealth Department of Health** with questions about the national (PBS) legislative framework for electronic prescribing:

- > [ePrescribing@health.gov.au](mailto:ePrescribing@health.gov.au)

Contact the **Australian Digital Health Agency** with questions about the electronic prescribing conformance framework:

- > [help@digitalhealth.gov.au](mailto:help@digitalhealth.gov.au)

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## For more information

**Office of the Chief Pharmacist**  
**SA Health**  
**Department for Health and Wellbeing**  
**Citi Centre, 11 Hindmarsh Square, Adelaide**  
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