Victoria Government Gazette

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Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY ORDER UNDER SECTION 22G (PHEO #7)

I, Kym Peake, Secretary to the Department of Health and Human Services, pursuant to section 22G of the **Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981**, extend the public health emergency order (Order) published in the Government Gazette No. S277 Wednesday 10 June 2020 (PHEO #7) in the belief that it is necessary to do so in order to prevent a serious risk to public health and to respond to the public health emergency which is the potential for serious medicine shortages caused by the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Victoria.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration has established a process to identify medicine shortages, and propose conditions to apply nationally under which a medicine in short supply may be substituted by the pharmacist.

The purpose of this Order is to extend PHEO #7 to enable pharmacists to continue to supply a medicine in Victoria consistent with a Therapeutic Goods Administration Serious Shortage Substitution Notice (SSSN).

For the purposes of regulation 50(4) of the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017, this Order specifies additional exceptional circumstances in which a pharmacist may sell or supply a Schedule 4 poison on a prescription contrary to the instructions on the prescription.

By this Order I authorise all pharmacists registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Victoria) to practise in the pharmacy profession (other than as a student) to sell or supply the Schedule 4 poison specified in the SCHEDULE contrary to the instructions on the prescription to a person ('the patient') during the period in which this Public Health Emergency Order is in force, and without consulting the prescriber, in accordance with the conditions specified in the SCHEDULE.

SCHEDULE

Name of medicine (including strength and formulation): *Metformin modified-release (also known as extended-release or XR) 500 mg tablets* (Schedule 4 Prescription Only Medicine).

Permitted medicine (including strength and formulation) **to be supplied under this Order**: *Metformin immediate-release 500 mg tablets or metformin modified-release 1000 mg tablets,* in accordance with the table set out below.

Metformin modified-release 500 mg dose	*Medicine to be supplied*
1500 mg daily	Metformin modified-release 1000 mg plus metformin immediate-release 500 mg in separate doses
1000 mg daily	Metformin modified-release 1000 mg
500 mg daily	Metformin immediate-release 500 mg daily*

* some brands of metformin immediate-release tablets are scored allowing dose to be split

Restrictions on this dose form e.g. dose intervals

Details: When modified-release tablets are supplied, they should be taken at the time of day the patient would usually take their modified-release dose.

Where the result of the substitution is a dosing regimen using modified-release and immediate-release tablets, the timing of the modified-release dose should remain unchanged. The immediate-release dose in the regimen should be taken at a different time from the modified-release dose.

Limitations on substitution: Patients previously intolerant to metformin immediate-release formulations must be referred to the prescriber if the relevant substitution includes immediate-release metformin.

Conditions

1. The patient must provide a valid prescription for the medicine for which the substitution is being made.
2. The registered health practitioner who issued the prescription has not provided further verbal or written instructions that the pharmacist should not supply the medicine specified on the prescription in accordance with this Order.
3. Total quantity supplied under this protocol to be equivalent to the number of days supplied on original prescription.
4. The patient or their carer must consent to receiving the medicine(s) supplied pursuant to this Order.
5. The pharmacist may, in their professional judgement, determine that the patient is not suitable to receive alternative medicine under the notice e.g. known previous hypersensitivity or severe adverse reaction to excipients; known previous intolerance to immediate-release metformin formulations.
6. The pharmacist creates a record that the supply of a Schedule 4 poison was made in accordance with this Order PHEO #7.
7. Where the prescription allows for the supply of repeats, the pharmacist marks that the supply was made in accordance with this Order PHEO #7.

This Order comes into force on 1 August 2020 and continues in force until 31 December 2020 (dates inclusive) unless earlier revoked.

Dated 28 July 2020

KYM PEAKE
Secretary to the Department of Health and Human Services

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