Nurse Practitioner Prescribing Arrangements

Consultation Summary

Background

- There are more than 430 Nurse Practitioners (NP) in Victoria whose use, sale and supply (prescribing) of scheduled poisons is governed by Ministerial Approvals published in the Victoria Government Gazette.
- Eight formularies (lists of scheduled poisons) prepared in 2010 are listed in these Ministerial Approvals and are the basis for a notation on Victorian registered nurses’ Australian Health Practitioners Registration Agency (AHPRA) registration.
- Over several years, education providers, health services and peak bodies have expressed concern that these formularies, structured by schedule and class, reduce the quality and effectiveness of NP prescribing and the development of new NP models of care.
- Other jurisdictions and countries have made the regulatory and legislative changes to allow NPs to prescribe any medications within their scope of practice (area of expertise) so in 2018/19 the Department of Health and Human Services (the department) developed several options to achieve that outcome.
- The ‘Nurse Practitioner Prescribing Arrangements’ consultation was posted on the Engage Victoria website and remained open from 21 October to 16 December 2019.
- The consultation considered a new Ministerial Approval that would replace all previous Ministerial Approvals that reference formularies with a single approval allowing NPs to prescribe to full scope of practice.
- Further consultation was undertaken in April 2020 with stakeholders who had expressed concerns or were uncertain about the safety of the changes being proposed.

Survey Results

- 480 responses were received. 323 responders (67%) of participants, expressed support for the proposal, while the remaining 33% expressed concerns or were uncertain about the safety of the changes being proposed.
- Appendix 1 is the complete Nurse Practitioner Prescribing Arrangements – Quantitative Data.
- No survey respondents provided or directed the department towards evidence that Victorians would be disadvantaged or put at risk if the proposed changes were actioned.

Supporting themes:

NPs prescribing to full scope of practice will:

- Improve patient outcomes and reduce duplication of service
- Provide timely access to affordable care where alternative options may be limited (e.g. rural and regional Victoria)
- Allow NPs to keep pace with practice change and the introduction of new medications
- Meet the objectives of the national scheme to promote workforce mobility and consistent NP prescribing across Australia.
Non-supporting themes:
- NPs are being utilised as a medical replacement option
- NP’s have inadequate preparation for adverse events and lack education compared to doctors
- Formularies reduce unintended harm and prevent NPs from prescribing outside their scope of practice
- NP’s will be under pressure to prescribe drugs of addiction
- Patient mortality rates will rise.

Outcome
- The new Ministerial approval was published in General Gazette Number G29, Dated 23 July 2020. This approval revokes all previous approvals and references to formularies, allowing NPs to prescribe to full scope of practice.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (the department) will work with NP’s, Ahpra, peak bodies, health services and other key stakeholders to implement and communicate the new Ministerial Approval.

Evaluation
- Key stakeholders including the Chief Officer Medicines and Poisons Regulation, Victoria’s Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer, the NMBA and peak bodies will be invited to three-monthly meetings to review the on-going safety of NP prescribing in the first 12 months of scope of practice prescribing and to promptly respond to any unforeseen risks, as they arise.

Prepared by
Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine Workforce
Health and Wellbeing Division
Department of Health and Human Services
Appendix 1 – Quantitative Data

1. Q1. Do you support the proposed approach to authorise Victorian nurse practitioners to obtain and to use, sell or supply any Schedule 2, 3, 4 or 8 poison (medications) in the lawful practice of their profession?

Skipped: 1 | Answered: 479 (99.8%)

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<th>Answer choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67.43%</td>
<td>323</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32.57%</td>
<td>156</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>479</td>
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2. If no, please tell us why?

Long Text | Skipped: 340 | Answered: 140 (29.2%)
3. Q2. Do you believe there are any unintended consequences that would result from the proposed approach?
Skipped: 2 | Answered: 478 (99.6%)

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<td>65.06%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>478</td>
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4. If yes, please explain further.
Long Text | Skipped: 344 | Answered: 136 (28.3%)

Nurse Practitioner Prescribing Arrangements Consultation Summary
5. Q3. Would any Victorian be disadvantaged by the proposed approach?
Skipped: 2 | Answered: 478 (99.6%)

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<td>478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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6. If yes, please tell us who and how?
Long Text | Skipped: 353 | Answered: 127 (26.5%)

7. Further comments
Long Text | Skipped: 331 | Answered: 149 (31%)