



Enquiries to: Bill Loveday
Director
Monitored Medicines Unit
Telephone: 13 78 46
File Ref: C-ECTF-19/7562

Queensland Health

Dear Colleagues

As you will be aware, drugs of dependence are prescription medicines that have a recognised therapeutic need but also a higher potential for misuse, abuse and dependence. On 3 April 2019, the *Health and Other Legislative Amendments Bill 2018* (HOLAB) was passed by Queensland Parliament. Consequently, there will be changes to the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 (HDPR) that will impact on the regulation of Schedule 8 (S8) drugs of dependence in Queensland. These changes are designed to streamline certain regulatory requirements for S8 prescribing in Queensland and come into effect on **1 July 2019**. They may impact on your members' prescribing activities.

Removal of need to report on lengthy treatment

As a result of changes to the HDPR, it will no longer be mandatory for prescribers to complete a *Report to the Chief Executive* for treatment of a person with a S8 medicine for more than eight (8) weeks. Queensland Health can still request that prescribers provide further information about a patient's planned treatment with S8 medicines. However, prescribers are still required to apply for approval, orally or in writing, if they wish to treat a:

- known drug dependent person with a drug of dependence (controlled drug, S8) or restricted drug (S4) of dependency
- person with any "specified condition drug" other than for attention deficit disorder in a child or for treatment of narcolepsy.

Prescribers can still apply for a verbal approval by calling the 13 S8INFO (13 78 46) enquiry service during weekday business hours. Alternatively, prescribers can complete a Request for Chief Executive Approval form. A new form for prescribers that wish to treat a patient in these circumstances will be available on the Queensland Health website from **1 July 2019**.

Approval for S8 medicinal cannabis

Under concurrent changes to the HDPR, medicinal cannabis will be regulated in the same way as other S8 controlled drugs and S4 restricted drugs. Further information about changes to the regulation of medicinal cannabis in Queensland is available at:

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/medicinal-cannabis>

Prescribers who wish to treat a known drug dependent person with S8 medicinal cannabis should also complete a *Request for Chief Executive Approval* form. This is not required for S4 medicinal cannabis products. Monitored Medicines Unit (MMU) will aim to process this request within two business days.

Prescriber enquiry service

Queensland Health continues to provide a telephone enquiry service for prescribers seeking advice about S8 drugs of dependence. This service is known as 13 S8INFO enquiry service. Prescribers can call for information on:

- controlled (Schedule 8) drugs dispensing history for a patient

- Queensland Opioid Treatment Program registration history
- if a person is known to be drug dependent
- whether there is a current drug treatment approval.

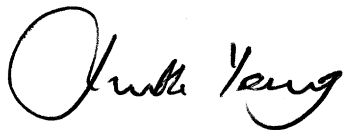
I encourage prescribers to consider calling the 13 S8INFO enquiry service before prescribing any controlled drug (S8) or restricted drug (S4) of dependency to any patients requesting these medicines. The service operates from 8am – 8pm, 7 days a week. Calls are answered at the Queensland Health Contact Centre. Calls can be transferred to a Senior Adviser for clinical discussion if required from 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.

MRQ name change

Medicines Regulation and Quality Unit (MRQ) in the Department of Health is responsible for regulating the prescribing of S8 and some S4 drugs in Queensland. In line with future anticipated regulatory requirements that will be implemented as Queensland moves towards real time reporting of monitored medicines, Queensland Health's Medicines Regulation and Quality Unit will now be known as the Monitored Medicines Unit (MMU). MMU will be updating Web pages, forms and other documents to reflect this change. MMU's email contact details are changing. Their new email address is mmu@health.qld.gov.au. Emails to the MRQ email address will be automatically redirected.

I am grateful for the ongoing contribution of your organisation and its members to the wellbeing of Queenslanders through S8 reporting activities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeannette Young', written in a cursive style.

Dr Jeannette Young PSM
**Chief Health Officer
and Deputy Director-General
Prevention Division**

27 / 06 / 2019