

## POISONS CONTROL INFORMATION SHEET

No. 311

### **REMOTE AREA ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKERS POSSESSING AND SUPPLYING SCHEDULE 2, 3 AND 4 SUBSTANCES**

This notice gives legal permission for an Aboriginal Health Worker (AHW) working in or from a health centre or clinic listed in Appendix A or B of the notice to:

1. Possess (hold or store) any Schedule 2, 3 and 4 substance while on duty as an AHW;
2. Supply (give) a substance listed in Appendix C of the notice without the direction of a doctor, as long as the AHW is doing so according to the policies of the health centre or clinic in which she/he is employed.

**The notice does not force an AHW to administer (give or use) a drug.**

The notice *enables* an approved AHW to lawfully possess (hold or store) and supply (give) certain drugs if it is part of his or her duties to do so.

**The notice does not give permission to an AHW to provide treatments if he or she is not competent or is not confident to provide the treatment.**

Even with this notice, an AHW who is not trained in the safe administration (use) of a drug should not administer (give) that drug.

**The notice does not change the duty of an AHW to obey the lawful directions of his or her employer; the notice does not give permission to an AHW to provide (give) treatment without the permission of his or her employer.**

The notice only allows an AHW to possess (hold or store) and supply (give) a particular drug if it is *in the course of his or her duties*. If it is the policy of the employer that AHWs are not allowed to supply (give) particular drugs without a doctor or dentist's approval, the AHW must obey that policy.

**This notice does not allow an AHW to possess and administer a Schedule 8 drug except under the direction or supervision of a doctor or dentist.**

Where it is needed, separate permission to use Schedule 8 substances may be given under section 42 of the *Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act*. An application for a section 42 permission is to be made to the Chief Poisons Inspector.

**The notice does not stop an AHW from administering (giving) any drug in line with the directions of a doctor or dentist.** Section 71 of the *Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act* allows a person to possess (hold or store) and administer (give) a drug to another person where the drug has been prescribed for that other person by a doctor or dentist, and is administered (given) in the way the doctor or dentist directs (tells) them to.

**Health centre managers should ensure that all AHWs have ready access to this notice.**

**An AHW who gives a drug that he or she is not allowed to give (because it is not in his or her employer's policy) will not be legally protected by the notice, and may be taken to court or have some other disciplinary action taken against them.**

**If a drug is not listed in the notice, an AHW is not allowed to supply (give) that drug without a doctor or dentist's direction, even though the treatment manual used in the health centre or clinic may recommend the supply (giving) of that drug.**