

POISONS CONTROL INFORMATION SHEET

No. 312

REMOTE AREA NURSES POSSESSING AND SUPPLYING SCHEDULE 2, 3, 4 AND 8 SUBSTANCES

This notice allows a nurse working in or from a health centre or clinic listed in Appendix A or B of the notice to:

1. Possess any Schedule 2, 3, 4 or 8 substance while on duty as a nurse;
2. Supply a substance listed in Appendix C of the notice without the direction of a medical practitioner, provided the nurse is acting in accordance with the policies of the clinic in which she/he is employed;
3. Supply a substance listed in Appendix D, but only if the attendance of, or advice from a medical practitioner is not reasonably available and the medical condition of the person requires immediate administration of the substance. After administration of the substance the nurse **must** bring the matter to the attention of a medical practitioner as soon as practicable.

The notice does not compel a nurse to administer a drug.

The notice *enables* an approved nurse to lawfully possess and initiate supply of certain drugs if it is part of his or her duties to do so.

The notice does not authorise a nurse to provide treatments she/he is not competent to provide.

Regardless of the notice, a nurse who is not trained in the safe administration of a drug should not administer that drug.

The notice does not affect the duty of a nurse to comply with the lawful directions of his or her employer; the notice does not authorise a nurse to provide a treatment unless she/he is also authorised by his or her employer to provide that treatment.

The notice only authorises a nurse to possess and supply a specified drug if the possession or supply is *in the course of his or her duties*. If it is the policy of the nurse's employer that nurses can not supply specified drugs without a doctor or dentist's approval, the nurse must comply with that policy.

The notice does not prevent a nurse from administering any drug in accordance with the directions of a medical practitioner or dentist.

Section 71 of the *Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act* allows a person to possess and administer a drug to another person where the drug has been prescribed for that other person by a doctor or dentist and is administered in accordance with the doctor or dentist's directions.

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

A nurse who supplies a drug/s in contravention of his/her employer's policy will not be legally protected by the notice and may be liable to prosecution and or disciplinary action.

If a drug is not listed in the notice, a nurse is not authorised to supply that drug without a doctor or dentist's direction, even if the supply of the drug may be recommended by the treatment manual used in the clinic.