



Office of the Chief Pharmacist

Communiqué

9 April 2020

National Health (COVID-19 Supply of Pharmaceutical Benefits) Amendment (Expansion of Telehealth and Telephone Attendances) Special Arrangement 2020

The National Health (COVID-19 Supply of Pharmaceutical Benefits) Special Arrangement 2020 and the National Health (COVID-19 Supply of Pharmaceutical Benefits Amendment (Expansion of Telehealth and Telephone Attendances) Special Arrangement 2020 (collectively the [Special Arrangement](#)) has been developed under Section 100 of the Act to provide an interim measure to provide a patient who is confined to home access to necessary medicine through “Image Based Prescription for Medicine Supply”.

The Special Arrangement came into effect on 8th April 2020 and makes the supply of pharmaceutical benefits to patients who have been prescribed a pharmaceutical benefit as the result of a Medicare telehealth attendance or telephone attendance more convenient and effective. Medicare telehealth and telephone attendances have been introduced as a temporary measure in response to the impact of human coronavirus (COVID-19).

The instrument modifies arrangements for the supply of a pharmaceutical benefit on a paper-based prescription to enable certain supplies to be made based on an image of the prescription provided to the approved supplier by the PBS prescriber.

The Special Arrangement is enabled in South Australia.

Noting the Special Arrangement removes the requirement for the prescriber to forward the original written prescription to the pharmacist, pursuant to Regulation 33(5) of the Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2011, an exemption has been put in place to exempt prescribers from the requirement in Regulation 33(3)(c)(ii) to forward the written prescription to the pharmacist as soon as practicable after giving a prescription by electronic transmission.

The exemption does not apply to Schedule 8 drugs or Schedule 4 drugs in Appendix D of the National Poisons Standard and these cannot be supplied under the Special Arrangement.

Further information will be available early next week including a South Australian Gazette Notice and Fact Sheet for Health Professionals.



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