

Important changes to Medicines and Poisons Regulation in Western Australia

Reading time:

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On 12 December 2024, amended **regulations** and a new **Code** for the prescription and supply of Schedule 8 (S8) and some higher-risk Schedule 4 (S4) medications came into effect in Western Australia. It is a legal requirement to comply with these new regulations.

Under the new regulations:

- all prescribing and dispensing transactions for monitored medicines will be recorded on **ScriptCheckWA**;
- it will be mandatory for all WA prescribers to register with ScriptCheckWA from 12 June 2025;
- prescribers may not prescribe a Monitored Medicine for themselves;
- the patient's date of birth must now be included on all S4 prescriptions and is still required on all S8 prescriptions.

S4 Monitored Medicines

Authorisation from the Chief Executive Officer of the WA Department of Health (CEO) is no longer required to prescribe S4 Monitored Medicines. However, prescribers are required to document a harm minimisation plan if the patient is:

- drug-dependent;
- on opioid substitution therapy;
- taking concurrent opioids with benzodiazepine medicines;
- being prescribed monitored medicines by multiple prescribers;
- being treated for a condition not listed on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods for that product;
- being prescribed a dose above that recommended in the product information for the condition being treated.

Harm minimisation strategies may include:

- viewing the patient's prescribing and dispensing history in ScriptCheckWA prior to prescribing Monitored Medicines;
- staging supply or limiting quantities prescribed or dispensed;
- using treatment contracts;
- declining early prescriptions;
- ensuring the dose is clear, including a maximum daily dose on prn prescriptions;
- limiting supply from a single pharmacy; or
- referring to drug and alcohol services for management of dependence.

S8 Medicinal Cannabis Products

Medical practitioners may now prescribe **S8 Medicinal Cannabis Products** without CEO authorisation where the following criteria are met:

Prescriber criteria	Patient criteria	Product criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Ahpra registration conditions or undertakings relevant to S8 prescribing;• The prescriber is authorized by the TGA to prescribe medicinal cannabis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aged >18 years• No history of psychosis, drug dependence, or substance abuse• Is not receiving opioid substitution therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The product is being used to treat a condition approved by the TGA (either on the ARTG or on the prescriber's authorisation)• Dose is within the limits specified in the Code

These requirements are separate, and additional to, any requirements of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

S8 Stimulant Medicines

Medical practitioners may now prescribe S8 stimulant medicines as the "Approved Specialist" without CEO authorisation where the following criteria are met:

Prescriber criteria	Patient criteria	Product criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">No Ahpra registration conditions or undertakings relevant to S8 prescribing;The prescriber holds specialist registration in neurology, paediatrics, psychiatry, rehabilitation medicine, or respiratory and sleep medicine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aged \geq 4 years (for dexamfetamine or methylphenidate)Aged \geq 6 years (for lisdexamfetamine)No history of psychosis, drug dependence, or substance abuseNot receiving opioid substitution therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The product is being used to treat an approved diagnosis set out in the CodeDose is within the limits specified in the Code

Other medical practitioners may also prescribe continuing S8 stimulant treatment under a shared care model with the patient's Approved Specialist, without authorisation of the CEO, at the same dose and form as prescribed by the Approved Specialist (or in accordance with written directions from the Approved Specialist).

S8 Opioids

Medical practitioners may now prescribe opioids (other than methadone) without CEO authorisation where the following criteria are met:

Prescriber criteria	Patient criteria	Product criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">No Ahpra registration conditions or undertakings relevant to S8 prescribing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aged >18 yearsNo history of psychosis, drug dependence, or substance abuseIs not receiving opioid substitution therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The product is being used to treat a condition approved by the TGA on the ARTGDose is within the limits specified in the Code

Other S8 medicines

Additional requirements are provided in the Code for the prescribing of ketamine, esketamine, MDMA and psilocybine.

Information on prescribing in other Australian jurisdictions

Prescribing requirements are different between Australian states and territories. To find out more about prescribing requirements outside WA, please see the links below. Please note that if you are conducting a telehealth consultation across state borders, you may have to comply with the prescribing requirements (including checking Real Time Prescription Monitoring databases) in more than one Australian jurisdiction. Please contact MIPS for further advice.

- [Australian Capital Territory](#)
- [New South Wales](#)
- [Northern Territory](#)
- [Queensland](#)
- [South Australia](#)
- [Tasmania](#)
- [Victoria](#)

More information about WA prescribing can be found [here](#).

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