ADHD prescribing in Victoria: what's changed and what hasn't

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Changes to prescribing rules for GPs in Victoria will take effect on 1 December 2026.

"If you prescribe Schedule 8 psychostimulants for ADHD, or are considering starting, the rules may have changed since you last checked," says Dr Owen Bradfield, Chief Medical Officer of MIPS.

What's changed in Victoria

GPs no longer need a permit to prescribe dexamphetamine, lisdexamfetamine or methylphenidate for ADHD in non-drug-dependent patients, provided they have a valid ADHD treatment instruction from a paediatrician, psychiatrist or ADHD practitioner. Permit exceptions have also been expanded to include ADHD practitioners, who are GPs that have completed additional training recognised by the Department of Health, in specified circumstances.

An ADHD treatment instruction must include the issuing practitioner's name, contact details and medical qualifications, the patient's name, address and date of birth, and the date it was given. Existing supporting letters that contain this information don't need to be replaced.

From 1 December 2026, prescribers should not rely on an instruction unless it also includes the medication name, dose, frequency and maximum dose, and details of the patient's ADHD diagnosis. The instruction must be kept in the patient's clinical record for at least three years after it is last used.

What hasn't changed

A permit is still required before prescribing a psychostimulant if there is reason to believe the patient is drug-dependent, or for a condition other than ADHD, unless a specific exception applies.

Two other obligations also remain unchanged:

- **PBS Authority Required rules**. These changes do not impact existing dose, duration and age-of-diagnosis restrictions that still apply if you want the medication subsidized under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
- **Documentation obligations.** Diagnostic reasoning, informed consent discussions (including risks such as cardiovascular effects and dependency), and monitoring plans should be recorded regardless of how much autonomy you have.

"If you want to prescribe psychostimulants under the PBS, you must comply with PBS requirements and Victorian prescribing laws," says Dr Bradfield.

Other important considerations before you prescribe

- **Check SafeScript.** It is mandatory in Victoria before prescribing a monitored medicine.
- **Review the treatment instruction.** Confirm it contains the required information and note any review requirements it sets.
- If prescribing via telehealth, consider whether the consultation genuinely allows you to verify the patient's identity and assess prescribing risk, in accordance with the Medical Board of Australia's telehealth guidelines.
- If a patient is located outside Victoria, check whether their jurisdiction's requirements apply in addition to Victoria's.
- Confirm current requirements with the Victorian Department of Health.

"This is a fast-moving area and guidance issued even a few months ago may be superseded," says Dr Bradfield. "If you're unsure about a particular prescribing situation, contact MIPS for advice before you prescribe rather than after."

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