

Council requirements and expectations for pharmacists providing hepatitis C medication without prescription

Purpose

This document outlines the Pharmacy Council's requirements and expectations for pharmacists providing hepatitis C medication without prescription, as per Gazette notice (6 September 2023). The Council reserves the right to review these requirements if any significant changes¹ are required.

Background

1. The Government is working towards World Health Organisation's goal to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030. Improving access to and uptake of hepatitis C treatment is a key objective of the [National Hepatitis C Action Plan for Aotearoa New Zealand 2020-2030](#).
2. A collaborative model has been established for trained pharmacists and authorised nurses² to provide hepatitis C treatment without prescription.
3. The pharmacist will work collaboratively with an authorised nurse to help oversee clinical records, blood test results, referral to secondary care (where needed) and patient-centred care.
4. Only consented hepatitis C treatments in a manufacturer's original pack can be supplied without a prescription.

The [New Zealand Gazette](#) states:

Prescription Medicines

Glecaprevir; **except** when supplied in combination with pibrentasvir in a manufacturer's original pack that has received consent from the Minister of Health or Director General for treatment of chronic hepatitis C virus infection to people who meet the clinical and eligibility criteria of an approved training programme, when provided by nurses who meet the requirements of the Nursing Council or pharmacists who meet the requirements of the Pharmacy Council.

Pibrentasvir; **except** when supplied in combination with glecaprevir in a manufacturer's original pack that has received consent from the Minister of Health or Director General for treatment of chronic hepatitis C virus infection to people who meet the clinical and eligibility criteria of an approved training programme, when provided by nurses who meet the requirements of the Nursing Council or pharmacists who meet the requirements of the Pharmacy Council.

¹ e.g. Updates to the hepatitis C clinical guidelines/ pathways

² Authorised Nurses are endorsed on the [Nursing Council public register](#). Nurses without authorisation cannot collaborate on non-prescription supply.

Eligibility

5. Registered pharmacists³ must meet the following criteria to be able to supply Hepatitis C medication without a prescription:

- a) Comply with the criteria for safe supply of glecaprevir and pibrentasvir as set out in the gazette notice;
- b) Comply with the professional, ethical and cultural obligations set out in the [Competence Standards for Aotearoa New Zealand Pharmacists](#) and the [Code of Ethics](#);
- c) Have evidence of having successfully completed endorsed training programmes⁴;
- d) Collaborate with an authorised nurse for the care of the patient, as per [models of supply](#) :
 - Communicate with the patient's general practitioner (with the patient's consent). If the nurse is communicating with the GP instead of the pharmacist, the pharmacist confirms this and document it
 - Make appropriate [referral](#) (if required), or confirm if the nurse is doing this and document it
 - Maintain [documentation](#), including date, name of authorised nurse, agreed treatment plan (i.e. blood test results, clinical appropriateness, referral needed/not needed)
 - Medication is only dispensed from a pharmacy enrolled in the [AbbVie Care Pharmacy Programme](#)
 - Maintain dispensing records for the named patient.

6. Where possible assist the patient to adhere to the treatment ([patient resources](#)).

³ A pharmacist must hold a valid practising certificate for all professional pharmacy services, including the supply of any medicine.

⁴ Current training endorsed by Council as presented by the Hepatitis C Programme team are:

[Goodfellow Unit:](#)

- Chronic Hepatitis C
- Hepatitis C: Implementing non-prescription supply through nurses and pharmacists.

Note: Pharmacists who wish to provide point-of-care (POC) testing as part of their professional service offering will need to ensure they have undertaken training and is competent to carry out this activity. POC training is managed by the Hep C programme and do not required endorsement by the Council.