

FORM 1: APPLICATION FOR AUTHORITY TO PRESCRIBE A DRUG OF ADDICTION

Please use BLOCK LETTERS - all details must be completed legibly or consideration of this application may be delayed.

Under Section 28 of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966, the authority of the Ministry is required:

- (1) to prescribe for or supply to a drug dependent person any drug of addiction (Schedule 8), or
- (2) to prescribe for or supply to any person any preparation of dexamphetamine, methylphenidate or lisdexamfetamine*, or
- (3) to prescribe for or supply to any person other than a drug dependent person, for therapeutic use by that person continuously for more than two months, any of the following drugs of addiction – alprazolam (expected to be in force from 1 February 2014), buprenorphine (excluding transdermal patches), flunitrazepam, hydromorphone, methadone or any injectable drug of addiction.

*Special forms are required to apply for authorisation to prescribe dexamphetamine, methylphenidate or lisdexamfetamine for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

I, Dr (surname last)

of (FULL address)

Phone Fax

Email Specialty

Prescriber No. AHPRA Registration No.

hereby apply for permission to prescribe or continue treatment with the drug(s) – name, strength and dosage form:

(1)

(2)

at a dosage and frequency of (1)

(2)

(If dosage P.R.N., please indicate approximate weekly or monthly usage)

for D.O.B.
(Mr/Mrs/Ms) (patient's first name/s) (patient's surname)

of (address)

Specific Diagnosis (Please include **prognosis**, where possible):

NOTE - Copies of relevant hospital/specialist reports (if available) will facilitate the application.

I consider this patient is a drug dependent person (**as defined below**) (Tick appropriate box)
 is NOT a drug dependent person

Signed: Date:

A 'drug dependent person' means a person who has acquired, as a result of repeated administration of a drug of addiction or a prohibited drug within the meaning of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985, an **overpowering desire** for the continued administration of such a drug (Section 27 of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966).

Please see overleaf for further advice and clarification regarding the definition of a 'drug dependent person'.

Send completed form to: Chief Pharmacist

Enquiries: Tel 02 9424 5923

Pharmaceutical Services

NSW Ministry of Health

Locked Mail Bag 961, North Sydney NSW 2059

or Fax to 02 9424 5889

If faxing application, do not post the original form.

Definition of a 'drug dependent person'

There are various diagnostic tools available to medical practitioners to diagnose drug dependence such as DSM-IV criteria. However, for the purposes of compliance with the requirements of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act the definition of a 'drug dependent person' relies on Section 27 of the Act and as such, the specific wording '**an overpowering desire**' for the continued administration of a drug.

The drug dependent person experiences psychological and/or physiological dependence such that they cannot, at will, discontinue use without experiencing significant mental and/or physical distress, even in the knowledge that the problem may be worsened by the continuing use of the drug. **There is preoccupation with the need to obtain adequate amounts of the drug concerned ('drug-seeking behaviour'), which usually prevents them from playing a normal working or social role.**

The overpowering desire may manifest itself in certain tactics or behaviours, and is **not** determined solely on physical dependence alone, the consequence of which is expected from the long term treatment with a drug of addiction for medical treatment.

It is acknowledged that the determination of the status of a drug dependent person can be subjective, however it is a clinical decision that remains with the medical practitioner.

The following tactics or maladaptive behaviours are often exhibited by persons that may be a 'drug dependent person' for the purposes of the Act, and may be used to inform a decision on whether a patient is 'drug dependent':

- Presenting for the first time and requesting medium to high doses of Schedule 8 drugs of addiction.
- Presenting late in the afternoon or evening before the surgery closes and requesting Schedule 8 drugs of addiction.
- Presenting from 'the country' or interstate and requesting continued supplies of Schedule 8 drugs of addiction.
- Presenting with hospital reports, x-rays, or specialist reports (often from interstate) in support of the request. These should always be confirmed for authenticity.
- Loss of control over substance use, and unsanctioned escalation of prescribed dosages.
- Continued substance use over longer periods than originally intended, or medically appropriate.
- Time spent seeking or obtaining substances interferes with normal social, occupational or recreational activities.
- Reporting the alleged loss of prescriptions and/or medication, often with a police report to qualify the loss.
- Requesting private or non-PBS prescriptions in order to avoid detection, often claiming that it can be claimed by 'work cover' or private insurance.

Further advice or clarification can be obtained by contacting a Senior Pharmaceutical Officer at Pharmaceutical Services during business hours on (02) 9424 5923.

Prescribers are encouraged to consult The Royal Australasian College of Physicians' publication **Prescription Opioid Policy: Improving management of chronic non-malignant pain and prevention of problems associated with prescription opioid use** (available from <http://www.racp.edu.au/page/policy-and-advocacy/public-health-and-social-policy>).

References:

NSW Department of Health. *Responsible opioid prescribing: identifying and handling drug-seeking patients*. Sydney, 2008 (available from <http://www.mcns.w.gov.au/page/77/resources/publications/newsletters/>)

NSW Ministry of Health. *Recognising and Handling Drug Dependent Persons – Notes for Medical Practitioners* (TG 116A)

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians. *Prescription Opioid Policy: Improving management of chronic non-malignant pain and prevention of problems associated with prescription opioid use*. Sydney, 2009

Pharmaceutical Services website: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pharmaceutical>