

Chief Executives  
Local Health Districts/Networks

Dear Chief Executive

### **Changed arrangements for dispensing of HIV treatments**

I write to update you on changed arrangements for the prescribing and dispensing of HIV antiretroviral and hepatitis B antiviral treatments which are highly specialised drugs under s100 of the National Health Act.

From 1 July 2015, people requiring HIV or hepatitis B treatment will be able to have their medications dispensed at a community pharmacy. Online pharmaceutical services that provide postal delivery are also a community pharmacy access option that may be of interest to some patients. These new options, in addition to dispensing by hospital pharmacies, will make it easier for people living with HIV or hepatitis B to manage their treatments.

The Commonwealth advises that the new arrangements will standardise prescribing of HIV and hepatitis B s100 drugs. Both hospital and community prescribers will use a streamlined authority when prescribing and patients will be able to have these prescriptions dispensed at either a hospital or community pharmacy. If patients want to pick up their treatments from a community pharmacy, **they will need a new prescription written on or after 1 July 2015**, using the new streamline authority number. Patients with prescriptions written before 1 July 2015 need to go to a hospital pharmacy to have these dispensed.

The Australian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM) is leading communication with prescribers of HIV and hepatitis B treatments. ASHM has already sent alerts via their regular emails to prescribers and will continue to reinforce this information including that all patients picking up from a community pharmacy need a prescription dated from 1 July 2015.

Positive Life NSW is leading a communication strategy aimed at supporting easy access by people with HIV to community pharmacy and online options. Their strategy includes the electronic distribution of a fact sheet via websites and social media utilising HIV related organisations.

The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF) advises that where people with HIV require financial assistance in accessing treatments, BGF will continue to assist eligible clients whether their prescription is dispensed by a public or community pharmacy. Patients need to discuss how these arrangements are being managed directly with BGF.

**NSW Ministry of Health**

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For your information, funding for the Enhanced Medication Access (EMA) Scheme has been extended until 31 July 2015 to ensure a transition period for EMA participants. The EMA was initiated in 2010 as a temporary measure for people with HIV unable to access a hospital pharmacy. The EMA is administered by the Albion Centre pharmacy and has been providing postal delivery of HIV treatments.

The assistance of your pharmacy and clinical staff in informing patients of the additional dispensing access options would be appreciated. In view of the experience of public hospital pharmacists with HIV treatments, any support and advice that hospital pharmacists can provide to pharmacists in community settings, when required, would also be appreciated.

Should you require any further information on this matter, the Ministry's contact officer is Ms Marlene Velecky who is available on 9391 9239 or at [mvele@doh.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mvele@doh.health.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Chant'.

Dr Kerry Chant  
**Chief Health Officer and Deputy Secretary**  
**Population and Public Health**