



Australian Government
Department of Health

Advice for approved pharmacists supplying PBS medicines to patients in areas affected by Queensland and NSW Bushfires – November 2019

Pharmacists should note that the following arrangements apply in areas that have been affected by the Queensland and NSW Bushfires. These arrangements have immediate effect and apply until at least **30 December 2019**.

Patient Entitlement

If patients do not have their Medicare, DVA or Centrelink card the pharmacist should ring the PBS Inquiry line 132 290 (*press option 1*), for assistance with a patient's Medicare or concessional details.

Dispensing medicines under the 3 day emergency supply rule without a prescription

A patient can receive a three (**3**) day supply of medication without a prescription, in accordance with state emergency supply provisions.

A pharmacist may dispense using the 'owing prescription' provision

The pharmacist can confirm the patient's current medication details with the prescriber, or a prescriber may direct a pharmacist to supply a medicine to a patient in an emergency situation. Patients may be issued the amount authorised by the prescriber. The prescriber is required to forward a paper prescription to the pharmacy to cover the emergency supply as soon as practicable, in accordance with state law.

Continued Dispensing

For patients requiring urgent supply of oral contraceptives or cholesterol lowering medicines (statins), pharmacists may dispense a single PBS quantity under Continued Dispensing arrangements. Supply of medicines under these circumstances must be consistent with the *Guidelines for the Continued Dispensing of eligible prescribed medicines by pharmacists*. More information about Continued Dispensing is available from <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/topics/education-guide-continued-dispensing-initiative-pbs-requirements/31671>

Medicines subject to the 4/20 day PBS rule

In cases where the patient may have lost medication due to the Queensland or NSW Bushfires, the pharmacist may provide a subsequent supply, but must endorse the prescription with the words 'immediate supply necessary' and sign the PBS prescription.

PBS Authority line 1800 888 333 (PBS) 1800 552 580 (RPBS)

If a prescriber contacts the PBS Authority line for a patient who has lost their medication and the related approved authority prescription/repeats, the Department of Human Services can approve a new Authority inside normal time frames.

Medicine distribution arrangements

The Department of Health is monitoring PBS supply arrangements in areas affected by the Queensland and NSW Bushfires to ensure that patient access to essential medicines can continue during this emergency.

Telecommunications impact on PBS online

The Queensland and NSW Bushfires may affect telecommunications capacity in some areas. Approved pharmacists in these areas may not have real-time connection to the Department for prescription verification and entitlement checking. Any service interruption will not affect your PBS claim as your dispensing software will store all claimed items until the telecommunications and connection with the Department through PBS Online are restored and validation can occur.

Claiming - Missing prescriptions/no paperwork

If your pharmacy has lost or damaged prescriptions due to the Queensland and NSW Bushfires you should complete a Statutory Declaration and keep it with your records for compliance purposes. The Statutory Declaration should include a statement about loss of prescriptions as a result of the natural disaster/emergency, and an undertaking that an insurance claim has not been made.

Pharmacists can download a Statutory Declaration form from the following government website: www.ag.gov.au/statdec or purchase one from any post office or newsagent.

Emergency relocation of a pharmacy

Pharmacists seeking to temporarily relocate their approved pharmacy due to damage from bushfire affected areas should send an email to pbsapprovedsuppliers@health.gov.au or phone 1800 316 389 quoting the name of the affected pharmacy, its current PBS approval number, addresses of the current and temporary premises, and expected timeframe for return to the approved premises.

The Department of Health will advise wholesaler distributors of the temporary approval to supply PBS medicines at alternative premises to facilitate delivery of PBS medicines to the temporary address. **NB: The PBS pharmacy approval number will not change for these temporary relocations. Pharmacists are also required to continue to comply with State legislation with regards to the temporary premises they will be using.**

Issued by the Pharmacy Branch
Technology Assessment and Access Division
Department of Health
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