

## Medication - Administration by Endorsed Enrolled Nurses (The)

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**Summary** Extension of role of enrolled nurses to include the administration of Schedule 4 medication subject to certain conditions.

**Author Branch** Nursing and Midwifery Office

**Branch contact** Julie Williams 9391 9731

**Applies to** Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Dept of Health, Public Hospitals

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**Compliance with this policy directive is mandatory.**

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**CIRCULAR**

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<b>Contact</b>	Jill Arcus (02) 9879 3214 Pharmaceutical Services Branch Julie Williams (02) 9391 9731 Nursing and Midwifery Office

**THE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION BY  
ENDORSED ENROLLED NURSES**

This circular should be read in conjunction with Circular 2001/64, *Policy on the Handling of Medication in New South Wales Public Hospitals*.

Following consideration of recommendations arising from the (NSW) Nurses Registration Board Enrolled Nurse Education Forum, held in November 2002, the Nurses Registration Board of NSW concluded that enrolled nurses, who have undergone appropriate education and training, could administer Schedule 4 medication, including Schedule 4 Appendix D medication, under specified conditions.

The Department approves this extension of the role of enrolled nurses to include the administration of Schedule 4 medication, in public and private health services, conditional upon the enrolled nurses having completed a pre-enrolment or post-enrolment course, that includes a medication component and that has been accredited by the Nurses Registration Board of NSW ("a Board accredited medication course").

Enrolled nurses who complete a Board accredited medication course are taught the principles and procedures involved in safe medication administration **via all routes**. As part of their education program they are assessed in all aspects including drug calculations and safe medication administration techniques.

Enrolled nurses who have not completed a Board accredited medication course are not permitted to administer Schedule 4 medications. The advice given in Circular 91/121, *Recommendations Arising from the Review of the Education, Role and Function of the Enrolled Nurse in New South Wales, August 1991*, as referred in Circular 2001/64, section 6.4.2, still applies to these enrolled nurses.

Distributed in accordance with circular list(s):

<b>A</b> 6	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b> 6	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	73 Miller Street North Sydney NSW 2060
<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b> 6	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b> 4	Locked Mail Bag 961 North Sydney NSW 2059
<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	Telephone (02) 9391 9000 Facsimile (02) 9391 9101

In accordance with the provisions incorporated in the Accounts and Audit Determination, the Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officers and their equivalents, within a public health organisation, shall be held responsible for ensuring the observance of Departmental policy (including circulars and procedure manuals) as issued by the Minister and the Director-General of the Department of Health.

Note that the extension of the role of the enrolled nurse does not permit the administration of Schedule 8 medication.

**All enrolled nurses will continue to practise under the direction and supervision of the registered nurse.**

### **Local Policy**

Health services must develop local policy on the administration of medication by enrolled nurses who have successfully completed a Board accredited medication course. The health service policy must be based on this circular and on Circular 2001/64.

#### *Intravenous Medication*

Employers must consider an enrolled nurse's knowledge and experience prior to any accreditation for intravenous administration.

Policy on the administration of intravenous medication by enrolled nurses should include the requirement that:

- (a) An intravenous medication that is to be administered by an enrolled nurse is checked, prior to administration, by a registered nurse, preferably the registered nurse who is supervising the enrolled nurse. It is not acceptable for this check to be carried out by a second enrolled nurse.
- (b) The check of the medication includes the drug, dose, dilution, calculations, intravenous fluid, infusion device setting and the patient's identity, according to the medical officer's medication order.
- (c) The enrolled nurse is re-accredited at least every year based on an assessment of competence that reflects the standards set for the Nurses Registration Board accredited programs.

#### *Nurse-Initiated Medication*

Certain medication may be approved by the Drug Committee of a health service to be administered by nurses without medical authorisation. No preparation containing a Schedule 4 or Schedule 8 drug may be approved as nurse-initiated medication.

Health services should determine local policy as to whether enrolled nurses may administer all, or a limited range of, nurse-initiated medications (under the supervision of the registered nurse). This policy should be based on section 6.4.9, Circular 2001/64.

Employers must consider an enrolled nurse's knowledge and experience prior to any accreditation for administration of nurse-initiated medication.

Enrolled nurses may administer nurse-initiated medication approved by the Drug Committee as long as they have checked with their supervising registered nurse, prior to administration, that the medication is appropriate and safe for the patient.

## Summary and Conditions

Enrolled nurses may administer medication, including Schedule 4 medication, but not including Schedule 8 medication, **when and only when all of the following conditions are met:**

1. The enrolled nurse has successfully completed a Nurses Registration Board of NSW accredited course that includes a medication component.

Employers must confirm the education and experience completed by enrolled nurses who have been enrolled in NSW under Mutual Recognition Arrangements;

2. The Nurses Registration Board of NSW has issued the enrolled nurse with an endorsement for the administration of medications either by:
  - (a) a notation on the enrolled nurse's *Authority to Practise* certificate; or
  - (b) a letter (original) from the Board stating that the enrolled nurse has successfully completed an accredited medication course and that the nurse is endorsed for this practice. In this case, the Board will endorse the nurse's *Authority to Practise* certificate, when next issued;
3. The enrolled nurse is accredited by the employer to administer medications, including Schedule 4 medications.

In accrediting an enrolled nurse for this role, the employer must ensure that the enrolled nurse has completed a Board accredited medication course. The employer should also determine to what extent the nurse is to be involved in the carrying out of certain functions, such as administration of intravenous medication, depending on their level of experience.

4. The enrolled nurse is accredited at least every year by the employer, following assessment of competence, in the administration of intravenous medication.

Re-education and/or re-accreditation prior to this time must be undertaken if concern arises regarding the enrolled nurse's competence to administer medication by this route.

5. The enrolled nurse is working under the supervision of a registered nurse.
6. The health service has a policy in place concerning the role of enrolled nurses in relation to medication administration, including procedures for the degree of supervision to be provided by registered nurses, in varying circumstances.
7. The enrolled nurse feels competent to accept the role of administering medication;
8. In the case of Schedule 4 medication, administration of the medication has been authorised by a medical officer in accordance with clause 57, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2002. Administration of unscheduled, Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 medication, that has not been approved as nurse-initiated at that health service, must also be authorised by a medical officer.

9. The enrolled nurse administers the medication in accordance with policy stated in Circular 2001/64. In particular, the enrolled nurse must follow the principles for safe medication administration stated in section 6.4.3.

### **Definition**

The term “*endorsed*” *enrolled nurse* used in the title of this circular refers to those enrolled nurses who satisfy Conditions 1. and 2. above.

### **Further Information**

For further advice on the education and the role of enrolled nurses, contact the Nursing and Midwifery Office, NSW Health Department, on (02) 9391 9731.

For further advice on policies on medication handling, contact Jill Arcus or the Duty Officer, Pharmaceutical Services Branch, on (02) 9879 3214.

Robyn Kruk  
**Director-General**