



Prescribing Policy

Purpose

At Aurum Health, we recognise that prescribing is a critical clinical activity that must be performed with care, integrity, and in alignment with best practice and relevant legislation. This policy guides all authorised prescribers to ensure medicines are prescribed appropriately, safely, and lawfully within New Zealand.

Scope

Any Aurum clinician that has rights to prescribe under their professional body, holds the appropriate accreditation and meets all the legislative requirements to prescribe. We follow the Medical Council of New Zealand's Good Prescribing Practice, which is provided as an appendix.

This Policy complements the Repeat Prescription Policy and Controlled Drugs Policy.

Policy Statement

Prescribers must adhere to:

- Medicines Act 1981
- Medicines Regulations 1984
- Misuse of Drugs Act 1975
- Misuse of Drugs Regulations 1977
- Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003
- Privacy Act 2020 and the Health Information Privacy Code 2020
- Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights

Definitions (if needed/abbreviations are used)

Provide clarity on any ambiguous terms, abbreviations or jargon.

Procedures

Good Prescribing Practice

Prescribers must:

- Make the care of the client their first concern.
- Only prescribe when they are satisfied, through consultation or clinical review, that the medication is in the client's best interests.
- Take a full history including allergies, past adverse reactions, current medications, and comorbidities.
- Use clinical judgement to consider whether pharmacological treatment is necessary or if non-medicine interventions may be equally effective.
- Discuss the treatment options, benefits, risks, and costs with the client, ensuring informed consent.
- Provide clear instructions on medicine use, dose, frequency, and duration.
- Prescribe using NZF, Medsafe, and other independent evidence-based sources.
- Share prescribing decisions with other healthcare providers involved in the client's care, with the client's consent.

Prescription Content and Format

Prescriptions must include:

- Client's full name and physical address.
- Generic name, strength, formulation, quantity, dosage instructions, and duration.
- Date of issue and, where relevant, number of repeats and Dispensing Frequency Rule details.
- Clinician's name, Medical Council number, physical practice address, and signature.
- Special Authority number and client co-payment category, if applicable.
- Prescribers must not use abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.

Use of Electronic Systems

Aurum Health prescribers must use authorised systems (e.g. NZePS) that comply with Ministry of Health regulations. Where prescriptions are issued electronically, they must:

- Contain an NZePS barcode.
- Be generated by systems approved for Signature Exempt Prescriptions.
- Be transmitted directly to the pharmacy, with safeguards for urgent dispensing requirements.

Unapproved Medicines

If prescribing unapproved medicines under section 25 of the Medicines Act 1981:

- Document rationale clearly.
- Confirm informed consent, disclosing unapproved status and supply processes.
- Submit required information to the Director-General of Health.

Prescribing High-Risk Medicines

Medicines with a risk of misuse (e.g. opioids, benzodiazepines) require:

- Comprehensive assessment and documentation.
- Caution for new or transient clients—prescribe minimal supply (1–3 days) unless continuity is established.
- Communication with the client's regular prescriber and pharmacist.
- Reporting of suspicious behaviours to Medicines Control or the Police, as necessary.

Prescribing for Personal Contacts

Prescribing for oneself or close relations is strongly discouraged and prohibited for controlled or psychotropic medications. No Aurum clinician is authorised to prescribe for themselves whilst working for Aurum, and is required to disclose and discuss with the Clinical Director any circumstances where they may find themselves in a situation where a close relation has requested or requires a prescription.

Repeat Prescribing

Refer to Aurum's Repeat Prescribing Policy. In brief:

- Repeat prescriptions require recent clinical review.
- Prescriber must confirm the continued need, dose appropriateness, and absence of harm.
- In-person or telehealth reassessment is mandatory for high-risk or changing conditions.

Transition of Care

When transferring care:

- Provide an accurate, reconciled list of current medicines.
- Ensure any changes are explained and documented.

Record keeping and Audit

All prescribing decisions must be clearly recorded in the client's clinical notes, including:

- Assessment findings
- Consent
- Monitoring plans
- Communication with others involved in care

Support and Escalation

Prescribers must participate in regular peer review and audit of prescribing practices as organised by the Clinical Director. Where prescribing concerns arise, clinicians should seek collegial support and may contact:

- Clinical Director
- Medicines Control (0800 163 060)
- Health and Disability Commissioner
- Medical Council of New Zealand

If inappropriate prescribing is identified and substantiated, Aurum reserves the right to make statutory disclosures to the relevant clinical bodies and authorities. Further, any breaches may be considered gross misconduct.

Responsibilities

Clinical Director: for ensuring that processes and place that provide for a safe and appropriate prescribing environment

Clinicians: To maintain their professional standards and limitations for prescribing.

Related Documents

Repeat Prescribing Policy

Controlled Drugs Policy

Clinical Governance Policy

Document Control

Aurum Health Limited schedules regular reviews for Policies. However, we also take a proactive approach to policy maintenance based on learning, best practice and feedback. Because of this, be sure to regularly familiarise yourself with our policy set to ensure that you are aware of the most recent version. Do not rely entirely on the review date planned, as a new version may already be available.

This Policy is only current if it has been opened directly from SharePoint. Downloading and printing this Policy risks it being used when it is out of date. Therefore, with any offline version, please ensure that you check for the current policy online when using it for decision-making or reference.

Appendix: New Zealand Medical Council Statement on Good Prescribing Practice

<https://www.mcnz.org.nz/assets/standards/Statement-on-good-prescribing-practice.pdf>