

## Consultation on amendment of the Medicines (Standing Order) Regulations to enable nurse practitioners to issue standing orders

Please respond to the questions below.

1. What do you see as the potential benefits of an amendment to the Regulations to authorise nurse practitioners to issue standing orders **now** rather than as part of the review of the regulatory regime for therapeutic products?

Amendment now would allow for increased prompt access to medical attention/treatment for the public, reducing wait times for treatment and the potential negative effects to health that this wait time could involve. In addition, by making the amendment now, the ministry of health would be demonstrating their support and recognition of the full scope of practice of nurse practitioners, their extensive training, wealth of knowledge and position of authority within many departments.

2. What do you see as the potential risks of an amendment to the Regulations to authorise nurse practitioners to issue standing orders **now** rather than as part of the review of the regulatory regime for therapeutic products?

The biggest visible risk I can perceive is if the new practice is introduced with inadequate support and education in the initial stages. Nurse practitioners are trained and supported in prescribing practices but, this being a new addition to their practice, until it becomes familiar, to prevent errors and ensure confidence in practice by these practitioners it would be important that they are supported in this initial change over.

Within Neonatal care the nurse practitioner works within a team and it is the responsibility of two RNs prior to medication administration to also check the accuracy of prescribing no matter who has written the prescription. This process is a safety process which recognises that no matter who the prescriber, their experience or qualification, human error occurs. With this team approach to ensuring the safety of prescribing and medication administration, an additional safety net is provided to the prescriber.

3. Please provide examples to show the implications of an amendment to the Regulations to authorise nurse practitioners to issue standing orders **now** rather than as part of the review of the regulatory regime for therapeutic products?

Already there is strain on the health care system. By making this amendment now there would be reduced burden on doctors as this would become a shared task. This, additionally, could improve team work between doctors and nurse practitioners with the balancing of work loads. Further this could improve team relations between nurse practitioners and RNs as the two would need to work more closely to ensure accurate, safe prescribing and administration of medications between parties.

Delays on treatment and management of health care problems is already common and frustrating for the public. The immediate amendment could reduce some of this issue as nurse practitioners would have greater freedom to treat rather than the frustration of having to explain to family that they must wait for the appropriate medical practitioner to be present for prescribing.

Nurse practitioner numbers are increasing as it has been recognised the crucial gap in the health care system which these expert nurses are able to fill. By amending the regulation now, current nurse practitioners can be introduced into the process and be ready to act as mentors and support for new up-coming nurse practitioners ensuring the on-going safety of the process. In addition to this, by introducing the process now, standing order prescribing can be introduced into the current prescribing practicum training which nurse practitioners are required to undertake prior to prescribing to ensure the ongoing safety of the process.

