



SAPC e-Note



SAPC e-Note: PRACTICE ADVISORY: PRESCRIBING NURSES

Dear Pharmacy Professional,

Practice Advisory: Prescribing Nurses

The South African Pharmacy Council (“Council”) has received several queries recently regarding whether nurses are authorised prescribers. At its May 2022 meeting, Council resolved that a practice advisory on how to handle prescriptions from nurses be provided to the profession. The advisory is attached to this email and summarised below.

Handling prescriptions issued by nursing professionals

Nurses working in the public sector at facilities designated in terms of Section 56(6) of the Nursing Act, 33 of 2005, may prescribe medicines in accordance with the Primary Health Care Standard Treatment Guideline (STG) and Essential Medicine List (EML).

However, the onus is on the pharmacist to validate that the nurse is authorised to prescribe and that the prescriptions are valid in terms of Regulation 33 of the General Regulations published in terms of the Medicines and Related Substances Act, 101 of 1965 (“Medicines Act”).

Please note that a Section 56(5) designation issued to nurses is facility specific and, therefore, lapses when the nurse changes facilities.

Further note that a nurse who holds a Section 22A(15) permit, issued in terms of the Medicines Act, is **not** an authorised prescriber and cannot issue prescriptions for dispensing at pharmacies.

Yours sincerely,

VM Tlala
Registrar/CEO

Accessible quality pharmaceutical services for all



South African
Pharmacy Council

ADVISORY: PRESCRIBING NURSES

Handling prescriptions issued by nursing professionals

The South African Pharmacy Council has received several enquiries from the profession seeking clarity on whether they may dispense prescriptions written by nurses.

As per the letter from the Director-General: Health dated 1 April 2016 and the deliberations of Council in May 2016, Council supports the dispensing of prescriptions from nurses in the services of provincial and municipal departments of health authorised in accordance with Section 56(6) of the Nursing Act, 33 of 2005. Council noted that such nurses may only prescribe medicines for adults and children in accordance with the Primary Health Care Standard Treatment Guideline (STG) and Essential Medicine List (EML). Pharmacists must, however, validate that the nurse is authorised to prescribe and that the prescriptions are valid in terms of Regulation 33 of the *General Regulations* published in terms of the Medicines and Related Substances Act, 101 of 1965.

Nurses employed by the pharmacy may perform services in line with their scope of practice as registered with the South African Nursing Council, this includes, but is not limited to, the administration of vaccines and medicines prescribed by an authorised prescriber. In the absence of an applicable pharmacist/pharmacy permit, e.g. Primary Care Drug Therapy (PCDT) or COVID-19 vaccination permit, the nurse must obtain a permit in terms of Section 22A(15) of the Medicines and Related Substances Act, 101 of 1965 (Medicines Act), to offer services in line with the conditions of the permit and their scope of practice.

Nurses operating a practice in a pharmacy – the pharmacy must obtain approval from Council to operate another practice/business in a pharmacy and the nurse must obtain the relevant approval(s) and/or permit(s) in terms of Section 22A(15) of the Medicines Act, to offer services in line with the conditions of the permit(s) and their scope of practice.

A Section 22A(15) permit does not provide that the holder of the permit is an authorised prescriber as determined in Section 22A of the Medicines Act; therefore, they may not write prescriptions for the pharmacy to dispense. Pharmacies may not dispense prescriptions written by nurses who are either in their employment or have received approval to operate a practice in their pharmacies.

Pharmacists may dispense a prescription written by a nurse provided that the organisation from/for which the nurse is practising is designated in terms of Section 56(6) of the Nursing Act, 33 of 2005, and the nurse is duly authorised to diagnose, prescribe and dispense for conditions in the standing orders of the organisation according to treatment protocols, and that such pharmacist is able to validate the designation of the organisation, the authorisation of the nurse and the validity of the prescription.

Section 56(6) designation issued to nurses is facility specific and, therefore, lapses when the nurse moves to a different facility.