Guidance for Dealing with a Fraudulent or Suspicious Prescription in the Pharmacy

# Background/Purpose

This fact sheet provides practical advice to pharmacists including reasonable steps to take in the event of receiving a fraudulent or suspicious prescription, as well as ensuring compliance with Regulation 78 of the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulations 2014.

Under Regulation 78, a pharmacist commits an offence if the pharmacist receives a prescription; and becomes aware of a substantial risk that the prescription has been forged or fraudulently altered; and fails to give a copy of the prescription to the Commissioner of Police as soon as practicable (but not later than 7 days) after becoming aware of the risk. Pharmacists cannot legally dispense off a forged prescription.

# If you have received a suspicious or fraudulent prescription:

1. Retain the prescription or obtain a copy, if practical and safe to do so.
2. Contact the purported prescriber, to confirm or not if the prescription and all its details are genuine. Avoid calling a telephone number that is hand written – call instead the surgery number that you already have on record for that clinic / prescriber.

Depending on the circumstances surrounding a **confirmed forged prescription,** the prescriber may need to review storage of blank prescription pads and prescription papers.

1. Report a forged or suspect prescription to NT Police. The preferred number for NT Police for initial reports is **131 444.** Retain the incident number you are provided, for your records.
2. Report the incident and provide a copy of the involved prescription to Medicines and Poisons email: poisonscontrol@nt.com.au
3. Review your written procedures for dealing with forged and altered prescriptions, and ensure that all dispensary staff (including locums) are aware of the correct procedure to follow.

If you have already dispensed a potentially forged or fraudulently altered prescription, please contact NT Police, as well as Medicines and Poisons.

Pharmacists are experts in determining the need for medicines and the risks of delaying therapy until the prescriber can confirm the intent of a prescription. Sections 59 and 59A of The Medicines, Poisons Therapeutic Goods Act 2012 provide pathways to supply certain medications in an emergency where it is clinically justified

For more information please contact:

Medicines and Poisons

Email: poisonscontrol@nt.gov.au Phone: (08) 8922 7341