

Working with medicines

# Aboriginal health practitioners and workers

## Regulations

## Aboriginal health practitioners (AHP), registered with the [national registration board](https://www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/), and Aboriginal health workers (AHW), employed by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) or WA Health to provide healthcare or public health services, have various authorities under the [Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_13861_homepage.html) to possess, administer and supply medicines in Schedule 4 (prescription only medicines), Schedule 3 (pharmacist only medicines) and Schedule 2 (pharmacy medicines).

## The Regulations do not give any authority for Schedule 8 medicines (controlled drugs).

## Authority

### Definition for types of authorities

1. obtain (also called purchase) – legally buy medicines from a pharmaceutical wholesaler
2. possess – have custody of medicines, including storing a medicine for later use
3. administer – administer a dose of a medicine to a patient, when instructed by the prescriber
4. supply – when a quantity of medicine is given to a patient, to use at home
5. prescribe – write a prescription to instruct a pharmacist to dispense a medicine

The following table outlines the authority of Aboriginal health practitioners and workers to use medicines under the Regulations:

| **Practitioner** | **Type of Authority** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Obtain (purchase)** | **Possess** | **Administer** | **Supply** | **Prescribe** |
| Aboriginal Health Practitioner |  | 🗸 | 🗸 1, 2 | 🗸 2, 3 |  |
| Aboriginal Health Worker |  | 🗸 | 🗸 1, 2 | 🗸 2, 3 |  |

1. under direction of an authorised prescriber.
2. in accordance with a [Structured Administration and Supply Arrangement](https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/S_T/Structured-Administration-and-Supply-Arrangements)
3. from a remote clinic as in accordance to regulation 41(3)(a) of the [Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_13861_homepage.html).

Any authority is limited to the lawful practice of the professional and includes:

* working within scope of practice / general professional limitations as defined by the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia.](https://www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/)
* any relevant restrictions or conditions imposed on the individual practitioner
* working within scope of employment for Aboriginal health workers is as defined in conditions of employment with an ACCHS or by WA Health

## Purchasing medicines

Medicines must be purchased by an authorised health practitioner (e.g. medical practitioner) or Permit holder (e.g. ACCHS or hospital), in accordance with the [Regulations.](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_13861_homepage.html)

## Supply and administration

Aboriginal health practitioners and Aboriginal health workers may administer a Schedule 4 (S4) medicine in accordance with their authority, when directed by an authorised prescriber or in accordance with a Structured Administration and Supply Arrangement.

Aboriginal health practitioners and Aboriginal health workers may supply a S4 medicine in accordance with a Structured Administration and Supply Arrangement Medicine supplied from a remote clinic is only for current chronic conditions and this supply is to be given under the direction of a prescriber. Any medicine supplied must be appropriately packaged and [fully labelled](https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/J_M/Labels-on-medicines-and-poisons) in accordance with the Regulations.

## Storage

S4 medicines must be stored in a locked storage facility to prevent unauthorised access. For example: a lockable room, cupboard, cabinet or refrigerator. Precautions must be taken to ensure keys are not accessible to unauthorised staff.

## Recording

Aboriginal health practitioners and Aboriginal health workers must make accurate clinical records of all medicines administered or supplied and retain these for at least 2 years for S4 medicines. All records must be available to be produced to an authorised officer of the Department of Health.

## Compliance assessment

Aboriginal health practitioners and Aboriginal health workers may be required to participate in routine audit assessments to monitor compliance with these requirements. Non-compliance with the Regulations may result in regulatory actions such as restrictions or loss of medicines authorities, notification to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia, and/or prosecution under the legislation.

## More information

For more information contact the Medicines and Poisons Regulation Branch on:

* (08) 9222 6883 (Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm),[mprb@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:mprb@health.wa.gov.au)