

## Verbal Order for Controlled Drugs (CD)



Dear PCCNZ Member

We wish to update you on certain information and discussions that have occurred recently with the Pharmaceutical Society of NZ, Health Legal Teams at the Ministry, NZNO and the Chief Nurses Office.

A question was raised with regards to verbal orders and CDs and whether this practice is covered in the current legislation. The advice that followed from the Senior Pharmacist was endorsed by the Legal team at the Ministry in relation to interpretation of the Misuse of Drugs Act (MoDA). The information received from this indicated that whilst prescribers can give a verbal order to a pharmacist for the **supply** of a CD in an emergency situation, there is no provision in the legislation for verbal orders to be given to a nurse to **administer** the CD.

This initial information was circulated in an informal way to Palliative Care providers and resulted in some confusion as to what was needed to be done in relation to direct patient care and the accountability of nursing staff. Questions were raised and NZNO was contacted, a letter was written to the Chief Nurses Office requesting further clarity and raising concerns on the effect this may have on some patients care. [Letter to OCN](#)

PCNNZ have consulted with Hospice New Zealand, who has also been requesting further information and clarity around the interpretation of the MoDA. However a letter was received from Jane O'Malley on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015, which would appear to further support the original interpretation of the act from the Ministry of Health and the Pharmaceutical Society. [Response letter from Dr. J O'Malley](#)

The PCNNZ committee feel obliged to ensure that its membership is informed of this information as there may well be direct changes in practice that are required by services to ensure its nurses are working within the legislation. We are still making further enquires into this issue but would suggest that this information is shared with your employers as per Jane O'Malley letter.

Kind regards

Jude Pickthorne  
Chair PCNNZ