

Hospital Based Ambulance Service

Factsheet – current as at April 2025

Hospital-Based Ambulance Service | Extended Practice Authority – Registered Nurse (EPA-RN)

Background

Effective from 7 April 2025, changes have taken effect to the Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021 and subordinate Extended Practice Authority - Registered Nurses (EPA-RN) to authorise registered nurses (RNs) to administer or give a treatment dose of certain first-responder medicines when providing Hospital-Based Ambulance (HBA) services.

What is a Hospital Based Ambulance Service?

A HBA service provides pre-hospital emergency first response services in lieu of the presence of the Queensland Ambulance Service. HBAs are operated in 22 rural and remote locations across Queensland by RNs or Patient Support Officers instead of Paramedics. RNs have historically administered medicines using Standing Orders at these sites.

What is an Extended Practice Authority?

Section 232 of the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019* enables the chief executive to make extended practice authorities that:

- state the places or circumstances in which an approved person may deal with a regulated substance; or
- imposes conditions on dealing with a regulated substance; or
- requires an approved person to hold particular qualifications to deal with a regulated substance.

The EPA-RN authorises registered nurses who meet the stated circumstances, conditions and requirements, to undertake regulated activities with the medicines listed in the EPA-RN, beyond the dealings generally authorised for registered nurses under Schedule 7, Part 3, Division 2 of the *Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021*.

The EPA-RN comprises of four parts:

- Part A - specified services to address health and community need
- Part B - services in rural and isolated practice areas
- Part C - sexual or reproductive health services
- Part D – immunisation program services.

The EPA-RN Part A - specified services to address health and community need applies to RNs working in Hospital and Health Services (HHS) who are organisationally credentialed to perform a specified service with a documented and approved scope of clinical practice. The document must state the Health Management Protocol (HMP) that applies to the RNs defined scope of clinical practice.

What is a Health Management Protocol?

A HMP is a document approved by the chief executive that details the clinical use of medicines for services provided by a RN under the EPA-RN to patients of the HHS. A HMP is the clinical guideline supporting practice under the EPA.

Examples of a HMP include the Primary Clinical Care Manual or the Australian Immunisation Handbook. The requirements of a HMP are detailed in the EPA-RN.

Authorisation

RNs working under the EPA-RN to provide HBA services are authorised to:

- administer or give a treatment dose of a medicine listed in Appendix 2;
- give a treatment dose of an S2 or S3 medicine to a patient requiring treatment for the specified services;
- administer medicines for immunisation listed in Appendix 4; and
- administer or give a treatment dose of certain first responder medicines when undertaking HBA activities.

Conditions

- Authorisation is only for RNs working in one of the 22 rural and remote locations across Queensland.
- RNs must be credentialed if working for a HHS using a credentialing process that meets the current Health Service Directive.

Supporting Resources

- Extended Practice Authority – Registered Nurse: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/licences/medicines-poisons/medicines-poisons-act/legislation-standards>
- Health Service Directive, Queensland Health: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/policies-standards/health-service-directives/credentialing-and-defining-the-scope-of-clinical-practice>
- Primary Care Clinical Manual: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/orrh/clinical-manuals/primary-clinical-care-manual-pccm>
- Australian Immunisation Handbook: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/the-australian-immunisation-handbook>
- Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021: <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2021-0140>

Further information

For further information, please contact the Office of the Chief Nurse Officer.

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