



# SAPC e-Note



## SAPC e-Note: CONTROL OVER THE SALE OF SCHEDULED MEDICINES OR SUBSTANCES

Dear Pharmacy Professional,

### SAPC e-Note: CONTROL OVER THE SALE OF SCHEDULED MEDICINES OR SUBSTANCES

The South African Pharmacy Council (hereafter "Council") wishes to remind you that a pharmacist, and any other registered person who may assist in the dispensing process in line with the scope of practice for which they are registered, has the professional responsibility to exercise proper and/or reasonable care in respect of and control over medicines, in accordance with the *Rules relating to the Code of Conduct for pharmacists and other persons registered in terms of the Pharmacy Act* published in terms of Section 35A(b)(i) of the Pharmacy Act, 53 of 1974 as amended.

Particular attention is drawn to Rule 1.9.5: "Medicine misuse" which states:

- (a) A pharmacist must exercise professional judgment to prevent the supply of unnecessary and excessive quantities of medicines and other products, particularly those that are liable to be misused or abused.
- (b) Many scheduled medicines have a potential for misuse or dependency. Care should be taken with their supply even when it is legally authorised by prescription or signed order. A pharmacist should be alert to the possibility of medicine dependency in health care professionals and patients, and should make enquiries to ensure that such medicines are to be used responsibly and should refuse to dispense these medicines when circumstances warrant such refusal.
- (c) Certain non-prescription medicines and non-medicinal products are likely to be misused/abused, which in this context usually means:
  - (i) consumption over a lengthy period; and/or
  - (ii) consumption of doses substantially higher than recommended.

Requests for such products should be dealt with personally by the pharmacist and sale should be refused if it is apparent that the purchase is not for a genuine medicinal purpose or if the frequency of purchase suggests overuse.

- (d) When a pharmacist becomes aware that a patient is abusing a substance, that patient should be referred to an appropriate practitioner or institution.
- (e) The products which are abused are subject to change and pharmacists should keep abreast of local and national trends.

All registered persons should constantly work to advance public health, preserve and uphold the honour and dignity of the pharmacy profession, and abstain from any actions that can damage the profession. It is thus important for a pharmacist to ensure that they exercise proper control over medicines to avoid the misuse or abuse of medicines by the public.

It remains the responsibility of the Responsible Pharmacist to ensure that pharmacy staff perform their duties with due diligence and adhere to the code of conduct and any other related legislation governing the supply of medicines, and to ensure that they use their professional judgment to avoid supplying unneeded and excessive amounts of medicines, especially those that could be abused or misused.

Yours sincerely,

VM Tlala  
***Registrar/CEO***

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