Prescribing by midwives with NMBA *Endorsement for scheduled medicines* in SA Health facilities

SA Health values the contribution of midwives in improving the outcomes for women and their babies. To facilitate public sector midwives to work to their full scope of practice a process to support prescribing in midwifery roles has been developed. This aligns with the Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Directions 2019-2022, which states that midwives will ‘continue to work collaboratively to extend their full scope of practice;’ and ‘provide compassionate, reliable woman-centred care that is timely, appropriate and supports wellbeing.’

In 2010 provisions were made under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law) to enable registered midwives who have been endorsed by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) to prescribe scheduled medicines. Previously the use of this endorsement in South Australia has been restricted to midwives working exclusively in private practice. Using endorsed midwives in the public hospital setting however has the potential to improve outcomes by ensuring that women receive the treatment they need in a more timely manner. Only midwives who hold the NMBA *Endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives* will be eligible to apply for prescribing credentialing.

Midwives are enabled to prescribe in accordance with the following legislation:

- The [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia) Act 2010](https://www.floridainfo.com/)
- The [South Australia Controlled Substances Act 1984](https://www.sahg.sa.gov.au/)

**How do I become endorsed through the NMBA to prescribe?**

In order to apply to hold the *Endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives* with the NMBA, a midwife must meet and maintain requirements of the NMBA Registration standard: [Endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives](https://www.nmba.gov.au/). Additional information related to the endorsement can be found on the [NMBA website](https://www.nmba.gov.au/).

**How do I become a midwife prescriber at the facility in which I work?**

Once you gain endorsement with the NMBA, in order to prescribe within your SA Health role you will need to undergo a credentialing process in your Local Health Network (LHN). Although the process to enable this to happen may vary slightly between the LHNs, the agreed [Principles for Midwifery Prescribing in SA Health](https://www.sahg.sa.gov.au/) will provide some guidance. The process is additionally governed by the Credentialing and Defining the Scope of Clinical Practice for Midwives Policy Directive. The credentialing process to prescribe in your LHN may include the following steps:

- Identification of a role by the midwife, in agreement with the organisation, where prescribing may be included.
- Inclusion of prescribing in the midwife’s role descriptor.
- Identification of key outcome measures pertaining to the role where prescribing is included.
- Identification of a personal or preferred drugs list (P-List) for submission to the credentialing committee.
- A review of qualifications and other credentialing requirements by the LHN’s credentialing committee.
All midwives who are credentialed to prescribe will be denoted as an endorsed prescriber on the SA Health Credentialing Database and will be monitored on a 12 monthly basis by the credentialing committee at their LHN.

A formal evaluation of the role may be required at the LHN level.

In order to prescribe within their SA Health role, all midwives will be additionally required to attain a Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) prescriber number from the Australian Government Department of Human Services. Information regarding PBS numbers and application forms can be found on the Australian Government Services Australia website.

**What is a P-List?**

A P-List is a Preferred Drugs List, as recommended by the World Health Organisation in their Guide to Good Prescribing. It is a comprehensive list of medications compiled by a prescriber (ie. the midwife with the NMBA endorsement), and chosen as a part of preferred treatment for common conditions. It is a list that the midwife will use regularly as part of their practice. This list is an important prescribing aid to assist the prescriber in becoming familiar with commonly prescribed medicines. The list provides evidence of contemporary prescribing practice and enables ongoing monitoring of prescribing practices. It can also be used as evidence for NMBA continuing professional development in relation to the midwife’s prescribing practice. Midwives who are credentialed to prescribe at their LHN should ensure that their P-List is kept up-to-date and only includes medicines that are:

- available on the relevant health facility/state-wide formulary
- in line with local clinical guidelines
- within the midwife’s approved scope of practice

**What midwifery roles could include prescribing?**

As previously indicated, the identification of a midwifery role where prescribing may be included is determined by the organisation. Examples of roles where prescribing could be considered include:

- domiciliary midwifery
- women's assessment services
- midwifery clinics
- breastfeeding clinics
- midwifery group practices
- primary health antenatal care
- birth centres

For more information

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