



Enquiries to: Dr Bill Loveday
Director
Monitored Medicines Unit
Healthcare Regulation Branch
Telephone: [REDACTED]
File Ref: C-ECTF-23/1569

Queensland Health

Dr Brett Dale
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Australian Medical Association Queensland
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Email: [REDACTED]

cc. [REDACTED]

Dear Dr Dale

Thank you for your email to Professor Keith McNeil dated 4 February 2023 in response to the 'Reminder: Requirement to check QScript (prescriber)' (education email) sent to prescribers on 3 February 2023.

The *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019* (MPA) and the Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021 commenced on Monday 27 September 2021. Queensland's real-time prescription monitoring system known as QScript also commenced at this time. QScript provides health practitioners with real-time information about the prescribing and dispensing of monitored medicines to help support clinical decision-making.

Under section 41 of the MPA, relevant practitioners are required to check QScript before prescribing, dispensing or giving a treatment dose of a monitored medicine for a patient, unless they have a reasonable excuse. The requirement to check QScript became mandatory on 27 October 2021.

The commencement of planned QScript monitoring activities was delayed in 2022 due to COVID impacts and the increased pressure in the public and private health sector. A reactive QScript Not Look Up Strategy commenced in August 2022. This involved sending education emails when complaints/reports were received about practitioners not checking QScript and/or non-compliance was identified during investigations.

A QScript Reminder to Register Strategy commenced in September 2022. This involved sending QScript Reminder to Register emails to practitioners who were identified as prescribing or dispensing a monitored medicine to a patient and did not look up the patient in QScript because they were not registered to use the system.

A general awareness strategy advising that proactive monitoring of compliance with section 41 of the MPA was commencing from 1 January 2023 was circulated to key stakeholders in December 2022.

Queensland Health's current focus is on encouraging compliance by providing education to ensure health practitioners are aware of their obligations under the new legislation. The intent of the education email was to provide education to ensure health practitioners were aware of their obligations to check QScript before prescribing, dispensing or giving a treatment dose of a monitored medicine for a patient.

I note that you have been contacted by multiple Australian Medical Association Queensland (AMAQ) members who have raised their concern that the education emails did not provide details of the date/s or patient/s for whom the practitioners allegedly failed to check QScript.

The education email was sent to over 5,000 prescribers. The QScript Monitoring Team is currently undertaking individual QScript audits for approximately 250 prescribers who have requested specific details of their non-compliance. The completion of these audits and the analysis of all responses received in response to the education email will be used to guide future education and compliance initiatives and future improvements to the QScript system.

A QScript update will be provided to the AMAQ and other key stakeholders after a detailed analysis of all responses has been completed.

Thank you again for bringing this matter to my attention. If you require any further information in relation to this matter, please contact Dr Bill Loveday, Director, Monitored Medicines Unit, Healthcare Regulation Branch on telephone [REDACTED] or via email at MMU@health.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Nick Steele
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Queensland Health
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