

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Statutory Rules 1989 No 330

Issued by the authority of the Minister of State for Housing and Aged Care.

Subject - National Health Act 1953

National Health (Pharmaceutical Benefits)  
Regulations (Amendment)

The purpose of the proposed regulations is to amend several existing regulations as they relate to the Safety Net provisions of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The amendments enhance financial control of the Scheme, add further information to prescription record forms and entitlement cards and limit the potential for hoarding or squirrelling of drugs towards the end of a Safety Net year.

Paragraph 84D(7)(c) of the National Health Act 1953 ("the Act") provides for the prescribing of particulars to be included on a prescription record form where a pharmaceutical benefit has been supplied to the holder of the form. The amendment to regulation 9A adds the amount of the charge made for the supply of the pharmaceutical benefit to the particulars already prescribed.

Paragraph 84E(3)(b) of the Act provides for the prescribing of particulars to be contained in an application for the issue of an entitlement card under the Safety Net Scheme. The amendment to regulation 9B adds the age and sex of the applicant and his/her dependents to the particulars already prescribed. The addition of this information enhances the identification of entitled persons for all future prescriptions under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Subsections 84H(1) and (3) of the Act provide for the making of regulations for the issue of additional or replacement entitlement cards. The amendment to regulation 9C provides that only the Secretary of the Department can issue additional entitlement cards for cards which have been lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed and thereby improves control over the issue of these cards.

Paragraph 105(a) of the Act provides that the regulations may prescribe the terms and conditions subject to which pharmaceutical benefits may be supplied. The amendment to regulation 25 extends the period between the filling of a prescription and the next repeat prescription of the same drug from the next day to three clear days. This amendment slows the potential for hoarding or squirrelling of drugs towards the end of the Safety Net year.

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