

2010

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

MEDICINES, POISONS AND THERAPEUTIC GOODS AMENDMENT  
REGULATION 2010 (No 1)

SUBORDINATE LAW NO SL2010 - 1

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Circulated by the authority  
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Minister for Health

## Overview

ACT Health approved the ACT Opioid Maintenance Treatment Guidelines (the Guidelines) as policy on the 17 June 2009. A key goal of the Guidelines is to maximise the number of practitioners and workers effectively able to treat and support those on opioid maintenance treatment in community settings.

The *ACT Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulations* came into effect on 14 February 2009. These amendments allow full implementation of the Guidelines. The changes would allow:

- all ACT medical practitioners with unconditional registration with the ACT Medical Registration Board to prescribe opioid maintenance treatment for up to five stable clients;
- medical practitioners providing care to clients in the police watch house to seek retrospective approval to prescribe opioid maintenance treatment;
- medical practitioners in the ACT being able to prescribe continuing opioid maintenance treatment for up to five stable clients as is currently the practice in New South Wales and Victoria; and
- medical practitioners who have undertaken a specialised training program and short examination in opioid maintenance treatment being able to induct clients onto opioid maintenance treatment.

## Clauses

### Clause 1 – Name of regulation

This section sets out the name of the Regulation as the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Amendment Regulation 2010 (No 1)*.

### Clause 2 – Commencement

Pursuant to this provision, the Regulation is to commence on the day after notification.

### Clause 3 - Legislation amended

This section expressly states that the legislation amended is the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008*.

### Clause 4 – s41

This amendment is consequential on the amendment of the heading of section 557 made by section 5.

### Clause 5 - s557

This amendment remakes the heading of s 557 to change 'interim approval' to 'standing interim approval'. This more accurately reflects the approval provided for by s 557.

### Clause 6 - s557

This section amends section 557 (2) to allow doctors to have standing interim approval to prescribe buprenorphine or methadone for people in police custody. Police custody may include people being held in the regional watch house.

### Clause 7 - s563

This section amends s 553 to allow the Chief Health Officer to approve a doctor to prescribe buprenorphine or methadone in the following cases:

- All medical practitioners with unconditional registration in the ACT can prescribe continuing methadone or buprenorphine for up to five clients concurrently who have already had initial treatment for at least 14 consecutive days by a doctor who has undergone specialised training in drug dependency; and
- Medical practitioners with specialised training in opioid dependency can induct clients onto methadone or buprenorphine, or prescribe for more than five clients concurrently.