

## Optometrist Scope of Practice: important information

You have registered in the Optometrist Scope of Practice. In addition to being registered within this scope of practice, you must hold a current practising certificate before you are allowed to practise as an optometrist.

Unless otherwise specified on your scope of practice, you are trained and qualified to prescribe optometric medicines. This means that there are certain legal obligations you need to understand. This document is intended to assist you in understanding the prescribing framework in New Zealand.

### **Please make careful note of the following:**

1. When signing your application you agreed to permit the Board to collect individual statistical data including the disclosure of your name (if requested) by the Board for the purposes of monitoring and auditing therapeutic optometrist prescribing behaviour as required by the Minister of Health.
2. The Board requires you to keep duplicate copies of ALL prescriptions issued.
3. Provisions for the prescribing of medicines by Optometrists are made under the Medicines Act 1981, Medicine Regulations 1984, and Medicines Amendment Act 2013. You should familiarise yourself with these documents. The legislation can be viewed on the following website: [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz). In particular, the Board draws your attention to section 8 of the Medicines Amendment Regulations 2005.

No optometrist authorised to prescribe a prescription medicine by regulations made under the Act may—

- (a) prescribe any prescription medicine if the optometrist is prohibited by a notice under section 48(1) of the Act from prescribing that prescription medicine or any prescription medicines of a class or description that includes that prescription medicine; or
- (b) prescribe any prescription medicine otherwise than for the treatment of a patient who is under the optometrist's care; or
- (c) prescribe for a patient a quantity of a prescription medicine that exceeds three months' supply:

Please note that (b) clearly means that you cannot prescribe a medicine for a colleague who asks you to do so, on their behalf, without having first examined the patient yourself.

4. If you are requested to complete a self audit, then as a prescribing optometrist there will be extra information you will need to provide; your therapeutic prescription rate, a TPA case presentation, and if you are independently managing glaucoma patients, a glaucoma case presentation.
5. Currently there is no provision in the Medicines Regulations 1984 that prevents you as a prescriber of a medicine from also dispensing that medicine. The Board strongly advises you **NOT to dispense medicines that you prescribe.**
6. Your scope of practice does not currently authorise the prescribing of controlled drugs under any circumstances.

If you do choose to dispense medicines that you prescribe please ensure that you are compliant with section 23 of the Medicines Regulations 1984, as follows:

Labels on containers of medicines sold by authorised prescribers or pharmacists—

It shall not be necessary to comply with the requirements of regulation 13 or regulation 15(1) or regulation 22 of these regulations in respect of any label on a container of a medicine that is packed, supplied, or sold by [an authorised prescriber] or a pharmacist with reference to the needs of a particular patient or (as the case may be) a particular customer, if the label contains the following:

(a) Either—

(i) A statement of the general nature of the medicine, and a recognised code indicating the precise nature of the contents or being a reference to a prescription book or similar entry; or

(ii) The name of, or a description of the nature of, the contents; and

(b) The name of the patient; and

(c) The name and address of the seller; and

(d) In the case of a medicine for internal use, the dose and frequency of dose; and

(e) In the case of a medicine for external use, a statement of the directions for use and frequency of use, and one or other of the following statements, or words of similar meaning:

``Caution: Not To Be Taken'', or ``For External Use Only''.

Prescription pads customised with your name and address will be made available on request from the New Zealand Association of Optometrists (NZAO). Please contact them on 04 473 2322. To issue prescription pads, the NZAO will require a copy of your APC showing your scope of practice and written instructions for the street address to be printed.

Many optometric software programmes generate a therapeutic prescription and this is acceptable to use as long as all the details are correctly filled in.

If you have any question about your scope of practice, please contact the Board's office on 04 4740705 or email: [registrar@odob.health.nz](mailto:registrar@odob.health.nz)

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