## Benzathine Penicillin Prescription for RHD Prophylaxis PHC Remote Best Practice Communiqué

### Raised by:
CQI Facilitators

### Background:
It has been queried whether Benzathine Penicillin can be administered without a valid prescription according to the approved Scheduled Substance Treatment Protocol (SSTP) for Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) prophylaxis. CARPA STM 6th ed. protocol for prophylaxis in RHD does not stipulate that a prescription is required for Benzathine Penicillin administration. Previously an amendment sticker had been issued to be placed in this protocol in the CARPA STM 5th Ed, specifying "Valid script required (only a single dose can be administered in the interim, while a valid script is organised)."

### Discussion:
With the CARPA STM now being predominantly updated online, stickers are no longer a viable way of managing changes to existing protocols in line with DOH requirements. Under section 250 of the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act, in conjunction with government Gazette G20, nurses and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners (ATSIHP) may administer Benzathine Penicillin against an approved SSTP without a doctor's prescription. The current CARPA protocol therefore gives the legal authorisation for Benzathine Penicillin to be administered without a doctor’s prescription; however it has not been the intent of PHC Branch to endorse ongoing Benzathine Penicillin prophylaxis for RHD without a valid prescription.

BPG examined the benefits and risks of continuing the previous policy of requiring a valid script vs removing this requirement and allowing ongoing Benzathine Penicillin RHD prophylaxis to be provided without a valid prescription as per CARPA STM.

The requirement for a valid prescription ensures that clients with a history of Rheumatic Fever receive adequate management of their condition with regular reviews by a medical officer.

It is critical for RHD prophylaxis doses to be given on or before the due date, and each day a dose is missed or delayed increases the risk of acute Rheumatic Fever. Administering Benzathine Penicillin without a script can be convenient and timesaving. Removing the requirement for a valid script may decrease the potential for missed or delayed doses; however it leaves the potential for clients to miss regular medical reviews.

### Consultation:
CQI Facilitators (Primary Health Care); Rural Medical Practitioners (RMPs).

### References:
CARPA STM 6th Ed; DoH RHD internet homepage; Australian guideline for prevention, diagnosis and management of acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease (2nd edn).

### Outcome:
Benzathine Penicillin for RHD prophylaxis must be administered from a valid script. Where a prescription has expired, one dose of Benzathine Penicillin may be administered and entered as RHD/ARF prophylaxis, service item (PCIS), clinical item (communicare) while a valid prescription is sourced. This ensures adequate follow up of the client in terms of their chronic condition, while also minimising barriers to achieving regular on-time RHD prophylaxis dosing.