

Dr Asher Freilich
Chief Executive Officer
InstantScripts
Level 19, 644 Chapel Street,
SOUTH YARRA VIC 3141

Via email: asher.freilich@instantscripts.com.au

Dear Dr Freilich

Online prescriptions update from InstantScripts

The Medical Board of Australia (the Board) has considered information on the InstantScripts website at <https://www.instantscripts.com.au/online-scripts> that provides information that patients can obtain ongoing online prescriptions if they have had one telephone consultation with a doctor from InstantScripts.

The Board confirmed that the advice on the InstantScripts website is not consistent with the Board's *Guidelines: Telehealth consultations with patients*.

The Guidelines state:

Prescribing or providing healthcare if you have never had a real-time consultation with the patient

Prescribing or providing healthcare for a patient without a real-time direct consultation, whether in-person, via video or telephone, is not good practice and is not supported by the Board.

This includes asynchronous requests for medication communicated by text, email, live-chat or online that do not take place in the context of a real-time continuous consultation and are based on the patient completing a health questionnaire, when the practitioner has never spoken with the patient.

Any practitioner who prescribes for patients in these circumstances must be able to explain how the prescribing and the management of the patient was appropriate and necessary in the circumstances

The Board recognises that it may be appropriate for a patient's usual medical practitioner or another health practitioner with access to the patient's clinical record to prescribe without a consultation in certain circumstances.

The final paragraph in the advice refers to the very occasional circumstance where a patient cannot attend a synchronous telehealth consultation but is a longstanding patient of a practitioner and provides for the writing of a short-term prescription to tide the patient over until they can have a synchronous telehealth or in person consultation.

A single telephone consultation with a doctor at a company such as InstantScripts is not the same as being the patient's usual medical practitioner. A doctor who prescribes asynchronously in circumstances where there had been a single telehealth consultation with another doctor would need to explain how the prescribing and management of the patient was appropriate and necessary in the circumstances if a notification was made.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
National Boards

GPO Box 9958 Melbourne VIC 3001 Ahpra.gov.au 1300 419 495

The Board is writing to you as a courtesy as the proposed approach from InstantScripts may be putting the medical practitioners that are writing prescriptions in the circumstances you have described at risk of regulatory action.

The Board will also confirm this advice in its upcoming newsletter so that all medical practitioners are aware that asynchronous prescribing outside the ongoing therapeutic relationship may put them at risk of regulatory action.

Yours sincerely

Dr Joanne Katsoris

Executive Officer, Medical

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Ahpra - Freedom of Information - FOI47659