

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Ambulance Services



Sunday, 1 September 2024

MAKING IT EASIER FOR VICTORIAN MIDWIVES TO DELIVER CARE

The Allan Labor Government is making it easier for Victoria's midwives to treat their patients by expanding the range of medicines authorised midwives can prescribe.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced the repeal of the outdated, existing list which limited prescribing by authorised midwives to a select group of medicines. In its place a Ministerial Approval now enables authorised midwives to prescribe within the full scope of their practice.

This change will ensure women can get the care they need sooner and reduce the need to visit their GPs to get a prescription for conditions commonly experienced during pregnancy and labour, such as heartburn, acid reflux, bacterial vaginosis, as well as pain relief.

This reform will also improve access to medical abortion by removing barriers to prescribing – making it safer and easier for women, including in regional and rural Victoria, to access abortion services closer to home.

Authorised midwives must have at least three years of experience in full-time clinical practice and have undertaken graduate education and training to prescribe Schedule 2, 3, 4, and 8 medicines – such as over-the-counter medicines, local anesthetics, antibiotics and strong analgesics.

The changes follow consultation with Safer Care Victoria, the Australian Nursing Midwifery Federation, the Australian College of Midwives and Australian College of Nursing, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

The previous list of medications was introduced by the former Liberal National Government in 2012 – the Labor Government listened to experts in making the decision to repeal these outdated rules.

The Labor Government continues to back our nurses and midwives – delivering a 28.4 per cent pay rise – helping to retain and recruit more nurses so more Victorians can get the best care.

It follows our \$270 million *Making It Free to Study Nursing and Midwifery* initiative, which is boosting the workforce, providing scholarships worth up to \$16,500 to more than 10,000 nursing and midwifery students, and more post graduate opportunities for practicing nurses and midwives.

This initiative also includes the Nursing and Midwifery Graduate Sign-On Bonus which offers a \$5,000 bonus to eligible nursing and midwifery graduates who complete their studies between 2022 and 2024 and then go on to work at a Victorian public health service.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"Our midwives play a critical role in Victoria's health system, caring for women and their babies through pregnancy and labour. These changes recognise the skill and professionalism of our authorised midwives."

"These reforms are all about making it easier and safer for women to get the care they need – including access to medical abortion, particularly for women in regional and rural Victoria."

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