



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**  
SINGAPORE

MH 36:14

MOH CIRCULAR 14/2016

11 April 2016

Licensees of Hospitals/Nursing Homes  
Registered Specialist Medical Practitioners at Specialist Medical Clinics

Dear Licensees/Registered Medical Practitioners

**GUIDELINES ON SOVENOR**

Sovenor (Buprenorphine) Transdermal patch has been recently approved by the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) for treatment of chronic pain. Sovenor contains the active ingredient, buprenorphine, which is a Class A controlled drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA). Hence, licensees are required to ensure that Sovenor is handled in a manner to prevent abuse and/or pilferage.

2 The Ministry of Health will monitor the prescribing and dispensing of Sovenor in hospitals, community hospitals and nursing homes. The guidelines (Annex A) outline the procedures and responsibilities of the licensee in the procurement, storage and dispensing of Sovenor. The licensees are required to adhere to the "Guidelines on Sovenor" as a condition for continued approval of their healthcare institution's licence under the Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics (PHMC) Act<sup>1</sup>. The Guidelines on Sovenor will take immediate effect.

3 For queries, please email to [elis@moh.gov.sg](mailto:elis@moh.gov.sg)

Thank you.

DR HAROLD TAN  
DIRECTOR  
REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT DIVISION  
for DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL SERVICES

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with sections 6(2) (a) and 6(5) of the PHMC Act.



## **GUIDELINES ON SOVENOR**

### **A. Doctors who may prescribe Sovenor**

1. Only specialists registered in one of the following specialties or sub-specialties are permitted to prescribe Sovenor upon approval by MOH:

<u>Specialty</u>	<u>Sub-Specialty</u>
(a) Anaesthesiology	(a) Palliative Medicine
(b) Geriatric Medicine	(b) Intensive Care Medicine
(c) Neurology	
(d) Orthopaedic Surgery	
(e) Rehabilitation Medicine	
(f) Rheumatology	
(g) Internal Medicine	
(h) Hand Surgery	
(i) Plastic Surgery	
(j) Neurosurgery	
(k) Cardiothoracic Surgery	
(l) Medical Oncology	
(m) General Surgery	
(n) Endocrinology	
(o) Haematology	
(p) Respiratory Medicine	

### **B. Responsibilities and Duties of the Licensee of Healthcare Institutions**

2. Healthcare institutions (HCI) are allowed to purchase, store and dispense Sovenor only if they are approved by MOH. Request for approval shall be submitted online through the eLIS website (<https://elis.moh.gov.sg/elis/info.do?task=home>) under the Drug Practices module. The application will be reviewed by MOH and the HCI will be informed of the outcome. In general, approval will be granted if the HCI has at least one approved doctor who can prescribe Sovenor.

3. The list of approved HCIs will be displayed on eLIS website. The licensee must appoint at least two pharmacists (if HCI is a hospital) or two nurses (if HCI is a nursing home/community hospital) to be in-charge of the overall dispensing of Sovenor in the HCI. These two pharmacists/ nurses will be the point of contact for Sovenor related issues.

4. After Sovenor has been dispensed, the licensee shall ensure that the HCI enters the prescribing information into MOH "Drug Submission" database in eLIS website. Submission shall be done within two days from the Sovenor dispensing date.

5. Licensee of the HCI shall ensure that the usage of Sovenor is checked and monitored regularly to prevent abuse and/or pilferage. Licensee shall submit information on the usage/stockpile of Sovenor to MOH on a yearly basis at MOH eLIS website.

6. Licensee shall ensure that if any practitioner is found to be errantly prescribing/using Sovenor or if informed by MOH, the access/use of Sovenor by that medical practitioner is to cease immediately.

7. Licensee shall ensure that Sovenor is dispensed only on prescription by medical practitioners who are approved under the MOH eLIS system.

8. The User guide on the application process and the submission of Sovenor prescription information is available in the eLIS website.

**C. Information for Registered Medical Practitioners**

9. Medical specialists from permitted specialties listed in paragraph 1 of these guidelines who intend to prescribe Sovenor must first submit their applications through one of the approved hospitals/nursing homes. The medical specialists shall start prescribing Sovenor only after they are approved.

10. Medical clinics are currently not allowed to procure, store or dispense Sovenor. Medical specialists who are approved to prescribe Sovenor and are practising in private medical clinics may provide a prescription to their patients for them to purchase Sovenor at the pharmacies of hospitals that are approved to dispense Sovenor.

11. Medical specialists shall prescribe Sovenor only when all other treatment or avenues for pain control have been exhausted.