

Submission by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Medicines Shortages and Other Measures) Bill 2026 and a related bill

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**Australian
Nursing &
Midwifery
Federation**



Annie Butler
Federal Secretary

Catelyn Richards
Federal Assistant Secretary

Alana Ginnivan
Assistant to the Federal Secretary (Strategy & Campaigns)

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
Level 1, 365 Queen Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
E: anmffederal@anmf.org.au
W: www.anmf.org.au



Introduction

1. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) is Australia's largest national union and professional nursing and midwifery organisation. In collaboration with the ANMF's eight state and territory branches, we represent the professional, industrial and political interests of more than 356,000 nurses, midwives and care-workers across the country.
2. Our members work in the public and private health, aged care and disability sectors across a wide variety of urban, rural and remote locations. We work with them to improve their ability to deliver safe and best practice care in each and every one of these settings, fulfil their professional goals and achieve a healthy work/life balance.
3. Our strong and growing membership and integrated role as both a trade union and professional organisation provides us with a complete understanding of all aspects of the nursing and midwifery professions and see us uniquely placed to defend and advance our professions.
4. Through our work with members, we aim to strengthen the contribution of nursing and midwifery to improving Australia's health and aged care systems, and the health of our national and global communities.
5. The ANMF thanks the Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Medicine Shortages and Other Measures) Bill 2026.



Overview

6. The ANMF supports the Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Medicines Shortages and Other Measures) Bill 2026 and Therapeutic Goods (Charges) Amendment Bill 2026 and welcomes the provisions aimed at improving the monitoring and management of medicines related disruptions, shortages or discontinuations.
7. The ANMF supports the intent of the Bill to strengthen key aspects of the medicines shortages scheme to enable Australia to be better prepared for shortages and discontinuations of critically important medicines.
8. Timely access to information about medicine supply disruptions will support nurses and midwives to make informed decisions about appropriate alternative treatment options helping to minimise impacts on patient care. It will also enable consumers affected directly by supply disruptions to make informed decisions and engage in discussions with their health care provider about suitable alternative treatment options.
9. The provision of timely, transparent information is essential for protecting patient safety, maintaining continuity of care, and enabling effective clinical care planning and risk management. Nurses and midwives are often required to adjust practice in response to medication shortages and early notification enables appropriate risk mitigation, staff education, and safe implementation of alternative medications.
10. Transparency is critical for patients reliant on medications in their everyday life. Access to clear information allows patients to plan, make informed decisions, and participate meaningfully in discussions about alternative options in consultation with and under the guidance of their primary health practitioner.



11. We support the release of timely and detailed information about medicine supply disruptions to relevant stakeholders and the public. Transparency is critical to safeguarding patient safety, maintaining continuity of care, and enabling informed clinical and consumer decision-making. Nurses and midwives require early access to accurate information to implement risk mitigation strategies, prepare staff, and support safe transitions to alternative medicines or devices.
12. Patients also have a right to timely information that may affect their treatment, particularly those managing chronic conditions or receiving care in the community or at home. Open access to information about medicine supply disruptions promotes informed choice, supports shared decision-making, and helps maintain public confidence in the health system. For nurses and midwives, transparency is essential to anticipating and managing clinical risks, guiding patients in the safe use of alternative medicines, upholding professional accountability, and partnering with consumers throughout their care journey.
13. If requirements for advance notification of medicine supply disruptions are weakened, including through the use of shorter reporting timeframes or provisions such as notification “as soon as practicable”, and patients are not informed of disruptions, significant risks arise. Patients who rely on ongoing access to medicines have a right to know when disruptions may affect their treatment, safety, or continuity of care.
14. Failure to provide timely notification may compromise patient safety and quality of care. Delayed communication can result in patients continuing treatment with unavailable medicines or transitioning to alternative therapies without adequate information, education, or monitoring. Nurses and midwives play a central role in supporting these transitions, and successful implementation depends on patients being informed and prepared. Limiting access to information about supply disruptions may also undermine consumer confidence in the health system and in the care provided by nurses, midwives, and other health professionals.



15. The ANMF supports providing sponsors with an opportunity to comment on proposed public communications regarding medicine supply disruptions. However, this process must not delay the timely release of information to health professionals, consumers, or the broader public where patient safety and continuity of care may be affected.

Additional Considerations

16. The Department of Health Disability and Ageing, Medicine shortage reports database consistently lists hundreds of medicine shortages across Australia; highlighting the need for continued action to strengthen medicines supply security and equitable access. While the Bill is a positive and important first step, further work is required to ensure that the health needs of Australians remain central to regulatory decision making.
17. Australia's reliance on imported medicines, limited domestic manufacturing capacity and exposure to complex global supply chains creates many points of vulnerability in the medicines supply system. Regulatory frameworks must incorporate lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic and support a coordinated whole of government approach to improve preparedness, routinely assess medicines availability and supply risks and strengthen supply chain resilience.
18. A collaborative approach involving governments, regulators, industry and health professionals will be essential to addressing medicines supply challenges. Consideration should be given to measures that support sovereign supply capacity, such as targeted incentives for domestic manufacturing of critical medicines, strategic reserves, improving supply chain transparency and improving communication to health professionals during disruptions.

Conclusion

19. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed amendments relating to *Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Medicines Shortages and Other Measures) Bill 2026*.