

**Administration of unprescribed sedative  
(07HDC12369, 30 April 2008)**

*Registered nurse ~ Rural hospital ~ Unprescribed medication ~ Diazepam ~ Rights 4(1), 4(2)*

A registered nurse working full-time rostered duties at a Health Trust's rural hospital administered 5mg of diazepam to an elderly patient, which was not prescribed on his current medication chart. The CEO met with the registered nurse to seek an explanation for her action. She advised that she did not intend to prescribe, but gave the man the medication because he was unsettled. She did not telephone the on-call doctor to request the sedation because she planned to ask the doctor to retrospectively prescribe the diazepam the next morning.

It was held that the registered nurse did not have prescriptive authority and therefore in prescribing the diazepam she worked outside her scope of practice. She did not provide a service with care and skill and that complied with professional standards, and therefore breached Rights 4(1) and 4(2).

The matter was referred to the Director of Proceedings, who decided not to issue proceedings against the nurse.