AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION
ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

NSQHS STANDARDS

GUIDANCE
for health service organisations

Position Statement

Ongoing medicines management in high-risk patients

Position

There are vulnerable groups where ongoing treatment is particularly critical and should be carefully managed to prevent medication error and harm. These include those with cancer, those with a mental health condition, and patients with chronic comorbidities, for example, diabetes and arthritis that may be taking multiple medicines.

Ongoing safe and quality use of medicines is essential for treatment of patients with comorbidities.

It is important to consider ongoing supply of medicines for both community as well as hospital outpatients more likely to have vulnerable groups accessing their medicines through hospitals only. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders attending dialysis clinics.

The My Health Record (MHR) should be used wherever possible for the documentation of medicines. In particular documentation at transitions of care should facilitate safe and quality medicines use. The **Pharmacist Shared Medicines List** contains information about the medicines a patient is taking at the time the list is created and is an excellent record for high-risk patients in particular who are managing multiple medicines.

The National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce has been established in Australia to support clinicians with continually updated, evidence-based clinical guidelines, including '**living guidelines**' and 'decision algorithms'. These guidelines reference those developed by the **Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society (ANZICS): COVID-19 Guidelines (Version 1)**. ANZICS 16 (March 2020).

In the US, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) also provides a **resource centre** which aims to provide evidence-based information and tools for pharmacists and other healthcare professionals.

The Liverpool Hospital in the UK has published an **extensive guide to drug interactions** between medicines and medicines used to treat COVID-19. This includes experimental medicines that are listed as **Potential medicines in COVID-19**.

It is expected that further information will emerge over the period of increased use of antiretroviral and other experimental medicines.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has carriage for the pharmacovigilance activities, including **reporting of adverse events** such as drug interactions.

However, issues with safe and quality use of approved medicines in clinical practice may continue to emerge.

Date of revision: 28 April 2020

If you have feedback regarding this position statement, please email: **medsafety@safetyandquality.gov.au**

04/2020