

# Newsletter

December 2023



## A message from our Chair

Welcome to the last VicTAG newsletter for 2023.

Thank you to all of you who were able to join the AGM and subsequent presentations in November, and a special thanks as well to all of our speakers. For those of you who were unable to make it and those wanting to watch them again, fear not, we will be sharing the link to the recorded presentations via email.

It is a real privilege to stay on as the Chair and I am very grateful to be able to continue this for the upcoming year. I am also pleased to have so many of our committee remain for 2024 and welcome Amy Crow too.

The committee is looking forward to continuing to support the needs of our members over the next year. With a number of projects underway and more to come, we want to make sure we provide benefit to all health services. There is a lot more on the horizon as we follow up from the Medicines Roundtable and advocate on medicines management, governance and safety.

I wish all of you a fabulous and merry festive season and look forward to working with you in 2024.

*Paul Toner*

## VicTAG Management Committee for 2024

Following the VicTAG Annual General Meeting held on November 29<sup>th</sup>, we are very pleased to announce the VicTAG Management Committee for 2024:

<b>President</b>	<b>Paul Toner</b> , Director of Pharmacy, Royal Melbourne Hospital
<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>Dr David Liew</b> , Consultant Rheumatologist and Clinical Pharmacologist; Project Lead, Medicines Optimisation Service, Austin Health
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>James Dwyer</b> , Director of Pharmacy, Mercy Public Hospitals Inc.
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Senthil Lingaratnam</b> , Director of Pharmacy, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
<b>General members</b>	<b>Associate Professor Mary O'Reilly</b> , Chief Medical Officer, Austin Health <b>Amy Crow</b> , Director of Pharmacy, The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital <b>Dr Greg Weeks</b> , Director of Pharmacy, Barwon Health <b>Vinod Chellaram</b> , Director of Pharmacy, Northern Health <b>Associate Professor Sue Kirsa</b> , Director of Pharmacy, Monash Health

**Wendy Ewing** also remains Chair of the VicTAG Quality Use of Medicines Committee.

Many thanks to **Dr Jason Trubiano**, who is stepping down from the Committee after many years of service, including in Executive positions and other leadership roles at VicTAG. **Dr Greg Weeks** also rejoins as a General Member after serving as the Treasurer. We are very grateful to both of you for your contributions.

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## Victorian Medicines Roundtable 2023

The Victorian Medicines Roundtable returned this year after a 4 year hiatus. The event took place in Melbourne and was well attended with representation from many health services and organisations across the state (see photos here and on the next page).



There was a focus on 4 key topics: Anticoagulant safety and stewardship, medication risks at transitions of care, high cost medicines, and managing critical care shortages. Invited speakers presented on the challenges and latest innovations related to the topics – visit the [VicTAG website](https://www.victag.org.au) to view some of the presentations.

Special guests included **Briana Baass**, Chief Allied Health Officer, Safer Care Victoria (SCV), **Professor Lena Sanci**, Chief GP Advisor, Department of Health, **Naomi Burgess**, Chief Pharmacist, South Australia Health, **Dr Andrew Wilson**, Chief Medical Officer, SCV, **Kate Warren**, Director Supply Chain Surety, Health Share Victoria, and **Bayan Hosseini**, Senior Improvement Lead Medicines Critical Response and Governance, Clinical Excellence Commission.

**Andy May** was also in attendance to present the Amy McRae Award for extraordinary contribution to medication safety. Congratulations to the winner, **Wendy Ewing**, Deputy Director of Pharmacy Quality, Monash Health, and VicTAG QUM Committee Chair.

We would like to thank **Dr Sally Cockburn** for being the facilitator for the day, all the invited speakers and panellists, and **Lisa Ciabotti**, **Wendy Ewing**, **Kylie McIntosh** and the SCV team for organising the event. We look forward to progressing the recommendations and ideas from the event and having another Medicines Roundtable in early 2024.



*From left to right: Dr Sally Cockburn, Kylie McIntosh, Lisa Ciabotti, Paul Toner, and Connie Yin.*



*Wendy Ewing (above), winner of the Amy McRae Award for extraordinary contribution to medication safety*



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VicTAG and Northern Health are seeking expressions of interest to join the working group to develop the framework and tools to facilitate the management of S9, S8 and S4D medicines that is consistent with legislation and best practice.

**Cynthia Donarelli**, Quality and Medication Safety Lead Pharmacist from Northern Health, is the project lead and any enquiries can be sent to her via [cynthia.donarelli@nh.org.au](mailto:cynthia.donarelli@nh.org.au). Applications close at 5pm on December 17<sup>th</sup>.

## Project Initiation And Planning (January 2024)

**Convene working group**

### Outline scope of project

### Gap analysis against 2003 framework

### Legalisation/ Regulations Requirements



- Fortnightly meeting
- Delphi method
- Continuous review
- Project updates

### Best Clinical Practice

**safekindtogether**

**Northern Health**


Congratulations to **Rowena Treseder**, Senior Medication Safety Pharmacist from Alfred Health, for being the successful candidate to lead the project to develop a framework for the safety, acceptability and suitability assessment of pharmaceutical products.

This is a joint project between VicTAG and Health Share Victoria, and expressions of interest to join the Expert Advisory Group will be sent out shortly. Stay tuned for more updates.

For more information, contact Rowena via [rowena.treseder@victag.org.au](mailto:rowena.treseder@victag.org.au)



As a reminder, each hospital is requested to regularly conduct a check of your hospital's stock levels against the list on the [ELSM Register](#) and email any changes or queries to [vpic@austin.org.au](mailto:vpic@austin.org.au). Many thanks to the Victorian Poisons Information Centre at Austin Health for maintaining the register.




**Antidote List**

NOTE: The dosage guidelines are not comprehensive and may not be suitable for all patients. Use as a guide for initial dosing, and call VIC TAG on 131268 for more information.

**COLOR CODING KEY**

- Should be immediately available in Emergency Department
- Should be available within 1 hour, individual assessment required
- Never not life critical, or used infrequently
- Not recommended as routine, or not available in hospital
- PC – Pharmacy Information Centre, Call 131268 (Staffed 24 hours)



**vicTAG Emergency and Life Saving Medicine Register**

To find which hospital stocks a certain drug, click on the drug name in the left hand column. To see which antitoxins a certain hospital keeps, click on the hospital name in the right hand column. To get information about indication and initial dosage of an antidote, click on 'Antidote list/indication and initial dosage'.


**Antidote list/indication and initial dosage**

Other Emergency and Life Saving medicines list: Indications and initial dosages

**vicTAG** advises all hospitals to perform an emergency and life saving medicines vulnerability assessment to determine the need for local stocking requirements. Not all hospitals will need to keep all medicines. Notes about shortages: Activated Charcoal - contact VICP if you need advice. Methylene Blue - shortage of 50 mg/5 mL, but 50mg/10 mL is available.

**COLOR CODING KEY**

- Should be immediately available in Emergency Department
- Should be available within 1 hour, individual assessment required
- Never not life critical, or used infrequently



**Other Emergency and Life Saving Medicines**

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**Indication**

Indication	Adult Dose	Quantity for 70 kg adult/24 hours	Contact toxicologist?	Other comments
Acute treatment of myasthenia	In bolus, 2-4 mg/kg given at 0, 12 and 24 hours, then once daily until onset of improvement is observed	8 ampoules	No	Contacted hospitals: Bayside services Antitoxin under Special Access Scheme (ASAS)
Acute attacks of bradycardia/angiodystonia	20-30 mg per kg bodyweight		No	
HBUS, malignant hyperthermia	2-3 mg/kg (up to 10 mg/100 kg)	25 ampoules		SAS, linked to Hospital

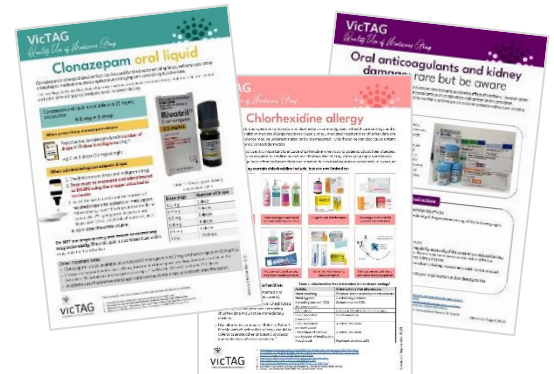
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## Medication Safety Alerts

The Medication Safety Alerts Program continues, covering a broad range of topics. The latest alert focuses on clonazepam liquid and is an update on the previous VicTAG alert on clonazepam. This alert and previous alerts are available to members on the [Medication Safety Alerts](#) page of the VicTAG website.

If you have any ideas for new alerts or suggestions for the program, or require word versions of the alerts for co-branding, please email [connie.yin@victag.org.au](mailto:connie.yin@victag.org.au).



## VicTAG QUM Group

The VicTAG QUM group provides a support network for VicTAG member hospitals to identify issues which increase the risk of medication error, determine practices to improve medication safety and discuss the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards. The group meets every 2 months, currently via Microsoft Teams.

Collated hospital responses on medication safety topics from the group can also be found on the [Quality Use of Medicines](#) page on the VicTAG website. Recent topics include managing insulin in Type 1 diabetes, methadone liquid labelling, potassium in paediatrics and reusing liquid medicines.

If you are interested in joining, please email Wendy Ewing, VicTAG QUM chair, via [wendy.ewing@monashhealth.org](mailto:wendy.ewing@monashhealth.org).

## Council of Australian Therapeutic Advisory Groups (CATAG) Update

CATAG published a draft Position Statement on andexanet alfa in November to facilitate and support the translation of best available evidence into practice.

The draft document is available on the [CATAG website](#) due to the urgent need, as this medicine is currently being assessed by medicines governance committees around Australia. The document is currently under active review following consultation with key Australian professional societies, and will be updated. A final document will be published early in 2024.

The CATAG website also contains other useful resources such as:

- Guiding Principles for Medicines Stewardship, managing medication samples, navigating high-cost medicines, biologics and biosimilars best practice
- Position statements for use of complimentary and alternative medicines, optimising My Health Record utilisation and supporting safe practices for low-dose methotrexate

## Email distribution lists

Interested in receiving emails from VicTAG? There are currently 5 distribution lists:

1. General communications
2. Quality Use of Medicines
3. Medicines shortages
4. Register of Emergency and Life Saving Medicines (ELSM)
5. Finance

Please email

[professionalofficer@victag.org.au](mailto:professionalofficer@victag.org.au) if you are interested in joining one of the email groups, or if there has been a change to the roles at your health service or organisation.