Newsletter

November 2019

Event: VicTAG Annual General Meeting and Invited Speakers

The VicTAG Annual General Meeting will be held on **Wednesday 4th December**, commencing at 3:30pm at the Royal Melbourne Hospital Pharmacy Department.

We are delighted to announce that we will have Invited Speaker presentations from health services that have experienced accreditation against version 2 of the Medication Safety National Standard.

Further details and forms to nominate to become a member of the VicTAG Management Committee will be circulated to members and are available the Events webpage.

Medicines Roundtable 2019

The Medicines Roundtable is an now an annual event hosted by VicTAG and Safer Care Victoria. It is for Victorian clinicians with an interest in medication safety and quality. It provides an opportunity to network with like-minded colleagues.

The 2019 Medicines Roundtable was held on Thursday 25th July where attendees heard the latest on optimising management of anticoagulants, opioids and other high risk medicines, measuring and learning from medication errors, the not so easy questions emerging on how to deal with pharmaceutical waste in our hospitals and much more. The Medicines Roundtable now has a dedicated webpage on the VicTAG website under the Events banner and the presentations from the day have been added to this page.

Planning has already commenced for the 2020 Medicines Roundtable. If there are any topics you would like to see showcased please send your ideas to the VicTAG Professional Officer.

Guiding Principles: Medicinal Cannabis

Following feedback from VicTAG members regarding the complexity of managing medicinal cannabis in a hospital setting, VicTAG have developed a Guiding Principles document that is intended to assist decision-making by health professionals, consumers and Drug and Therapeutics Committees in the evaluation, approval and use of these medicines. It is available on the Guidelines section of the website provides advice on prescribing, accessing, supplying and storage of medicinal cannabis products, including patient's own medicinal cannabis.

VicTAG Guiding Principles: Medicinal Cannabis

Chemotherapy Audit Toolkit

The Victorian Therapeutics Advisory Group (VicTAG), supported by the Victorian Government, commissioned the creation of a Chemotherapy Audit Toolkit for use by health services in Victoria, which has now been completed. The Chemotherapy Audit Toolkit is designed for health services to implement best practice management of chemotherapy prescribing variations and to provide auditing methods that are targeted and validated. The toolkit consists of two elements: a best practice framework for the evidence to patient process and a suite of tools for auditing variations in chemotherapy prescribing. The toolkit can be found on the new dedicated Chemotherapy Audit Toolkit webpage under Programs.

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Medication Safety Alerts

Last year, the VicTAG Management Committee released an Expression of Interest for a member to lead the Medication Safety Alert developed for 12 months. An extremely high calibre of applications were received and Toni Howell, Medication Safety and Strategy Pharmacist at St Vincent's Melbourne was appointed as the Project Lead. Under Toni's leadership and the valuable input from the VicTAG QUM Medication Safety Alerts subgroup, five new Medication Safety Alerts have been finalised and are available on the website.

New posters available: *APINCH Alert, Influenza Immunisation Alert, Medication Acronym Alert, Acronym Case Example, Sodium Chloride Reminder*

Upcoming posters: *Parkinson's Handover Alert, Be NICE – inform your patient about their medicines, Trade or Generic Name*

Click here to access the posters.

Completed VicTAG funded projects

Two projects funded in 2017 have now been completed. Select the project link below to see the Summary of Findings for the DePIMM project. The results are very positive and will hopefully be published soon.

Project 1: Deprescribing Potentially Inappropriate Medications in Memory clinic patients (DePIMM) – led by Dr Rohan Elliott, Austin Health

The NMBA Safer Practice Advisory Tool for hospitals has now been completed as is available to all VicTAG member hospitals. Select the project link below for information about the development of the tool to download the advisory tool.

Project 2: Safe management of Neuromuscular Blocking Agents (NMBAs) in Victorian Hospitals – led by Amy McRae, Alfred Health

VicTAG Funded Projects Update

Two projects were funded in 2018, one is nearing completion and the second will be completed in early 2019. Select the project below for the latest updates.

Project 1: Medication related patient information leaflets in multiple languages – led by Hayley Griffin, Monash Health

Project 2: The use of a beta-lactam antibiotic allergy assessment tool to improve medication safety – led by Misha Devchand, Austin Health

For 2019, due to significant member interest, the VicTAG Management Committee sought expressions of interest for two key projects in place of the annual grant application round. Following a high calibre of applications, the two successful applicants were:

1. Grace Wong, Western Health to lead the development of the Victorian Framework for Handling and Disposal of Pharmaceutical Waste – due to commence November 2019

2. Bishma Jayathilaka will lead a team of contributors from the Parkville Precinct hospitals to develop the Safe Handling of Medicines Framework – due to commence March 2020

Congratulations to Grace and Bishma! We look forward to seeing these projects develop, updates will be available on the Projects and Research page once the projects commence.

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High-risk medicines online learning modules

Victorian public health service clinicians are able to access the online High Risk Medicines course developed by SA Health. The course currently features four modules including :

1. Introduction to high risk medicines
2. Anticoagulants
3. Clozapine
4. Insulin

An opioids module will be released later in 2019, with one further module to be developed in 2020.

Register now at: www.hrmeducation.health.gov.au Please share this with your networks and encourage completion so that they can continue to be supported.

Activities undertaken by VicTAG in 2019

VicTAG has continued to support medicines access, quality and safety for member hospitals through a range of activities including the following:

- Contribution to the submission of Victoria's medication safety priorities to the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare (ACSQHC)

- Feedback provided to the Department of Health and Human Services on the draft core capability framework for Pharmacy and Medicines Management

- Submission of feedback to the ACSQHC on the national response to the WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge – *Medication without harm* (led by the VicTAG QUM Group)

- Responded to the consultation on the proposed general authorisation allowing Victorian Nurse Practitioners to supply and prescribe medicines to their full scope of practice.

- Continue to liaise with the SafeScript team regarding implications and implementation in hospitals

- Organised a Members meeting on the statewide pharmacy service for Voluntary Assisted Dying

- Co-organisers of the Medicines Roundtable

- Coordinated and contributed members to undertake the HPV clinical products evaluation (led by the VicTAG QUM Group)

Activities flagged for 2020 include:

- Development of Guiding Principles for the Management of Schedule 8 medicines and Schedule 4 drugs of dependence

- Guidance document for Pharmaceutical representatives attending Victorian hospitals

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 and determine practices to improve medication safety. The group meets every 2 months, alternating between face to face meetings and teleconferences and has an active email discussion forum. If you are interested in participating, please email Wendy Ewing, VicTAG QUM chair wendy.ewing@monashhealth.org

Become a VicTAG member.