

# VicTAG

## Victorian Therapeutics Advisory Group

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### VicTAG Incorporation on the Move!

At a meeting of members held at the Royal Melbourne Hospital on the 30th April 2008, the necessary steps to incorporate VicTAG were voted on, and office holders were elected.

VicTAG is now awaiting the final approval of incorporation from Corporate Affairs Victoria.

The Statement of purpose (attached) was approved along with the model rules which are available on the web

site. ([www.victag.org.au](http://www.victag.org.au)).

The following Office bearers were elected:

**Chairman:** Dr Geoff Matthews, Vascular Physician Austin Health/Epworth Hospital;

**Vice Chairman:** Kent Garrett, Director of Pharmacy Austin Health;

**Treasurer:** David Ford, Director of Pharmacy Royal Melbourne Hospital;

**Secretary:** Greg Weeks, Director of Pharmacy Barwon Health.

**Committee Members:** Dr Chris O'Callaghan, Clinical Pharmacologist Austin Health;

Ian Larmour, Director of Pharmacy Monash Medical Centre.

#### **Membership:**

Invitations will be sent shortly to each hospital explaining the membership process and invit-

ing two nominees representing Drug and Therapeutics Committees to become members of VicTAG.

As a result of incorporation, individuals representing hospitals rather than hospitals themselves, become members of VicTAG. Subscriptions are paid on behalf of representative members by hospitals. The new Committee is yet to set membership fees.

### Minister's visit

On Wednesday 23rd April, a VicTAG delegation of Kent Garrett, Ian Larmour, Sue Kirsas and David Ford met with State Health Minister, Daniel Andrews, his senior advisor, and Michael Furey (DHS) to discuss inequity of access issues associated with the PBS in public

hospitals. With a new Australian Health Care Agreement being negotiated at present, and with previous similar issues being raised at State Department level with little progress, it was felt timely to bring a number of issues to the Minister's attention. The group met for half an

hour, and discussed issues relating to:

- inequity of funding for inpatients for some high cost PBS listed agents and for patients requiring chemotherapy as an inpatient;

- access to the PBS for public hospital patients in Hospital in the Home, Nursing Homes and

Staff Clinics;  
- access to hospital initiated Medication Reviews.

The meeting was extremely positive, with the Minister undertaking to discuss these issues with his Federal Colleagues and the Federal Health Minister during the negotiation period.

### QUM/Medication Safety Group

A VicTAG QUM/Medication Safety Group is being formed to enable those working in the area or those with an interest in QUM/Medication Safety to meet to discuss ideas

and issues and to share and implement existing and new projects. The focus of the group is on assisting practical implementation.

Melita Van de Vreede, Deputy Director of Phar-

macy (QUM) Eastern Health has kindly offered to co-ordinate the group.

The first meeting is planned for Thursday June 19th 2008. Could you please advise inter-

ested staff to contact Melita directly via e-mail for further details. (Melita.VandeVreede@easternhealth.org.au)

## Statement of purpose of the Victorian Therapeutic Advisory Group

The Victorian Therapeutic Advisory Group (VicTAG) is an independent, not-for-profit association. VicTAG members are pharmacists, clinical pharmacologists and other clinicians from Victorian public hospitals.

VicTAG's purpose is to promote quality use of medicines by sharing unbiased, evidence-based information about drug therapy and to support the goals of, and facilitate the National Medicines Policy of access, quality, and safety in the use of medicines in Victorian hospitals.

VicTAG's objectives are to:

- support drug and therapeutics committees
- promote rational, high quality, cost-effective use of medicines in hospitals and the wider community; and
- investigate and evaluate new initiatives in therapeutics.

VicTAG through its multi-disciplinary membership and acting as an advisory group to hospitals, health professionals and others will achieve its mission through the following activities:

- develop or adopt hospital-developed guidelines aimed at standardisation of hospital practices;
- develop, in collaboration with members, appropriate policies on issues relevant to hospital drug and therapeutics committees, for example, drug and therapeutic committee drug formulary applications, funding of high cost drugs, and drug policies;
- communicate with drug and therapeutics committees on items of common interest, for example new pharmaceuticals, medication safety, and policy formulation;
- provide input into education programs in relation to access, quality, and safety of medicines at local, state and national levels;
- develop, disseminate and support strategies to assist hospitals in achieving the safe and efficacious use of medicines;
- form appropriate working groups to deal with specific issues relating to access, quality, safety and the quality use of medicines in Victorian hospitals;
- provide a support forum to hospital drug and therapeutics committees to advance work in specific areas such as electronic medication management including electronic prescribing and decision support;
- support research into the quality use of medicines; and
- liaise with organisations of similar purpose to achieve common goals.

### **Register of Emergency and Life Saving Drugs**

*Members are reminded that  
VicTAG maintains this Register  
which can be found on the  
website [www.victag.org.au](http://www.victag.org.au)  
Any amendments should be  
forwarded to:  
[judy@barwonhealth.org.au](mailto:judy@barwonhealth.org.au)*