Safer management of Neuromuscular Blocking Agents (NMBAs)

- Neuromuscular Blocking Agents (NMBA) are **HIGH RISK MEDICINES**.
- Inadvertent administration of an NMBA can cause catastrophic patient harm.
- A collaboration between VicTAG, NSWTAG, ANZCA and ACQSHC, the TGA and industry that led to the **mandatory NMBA labelling order**.
- Labelling improvement is critical, but only one safeguard.
- **A VicTAG grant supported the development of the ‘NMBA safer practice advisory tool’**.

Amy McRae, Senior Pharmacist – Clinical Informatics, Alfred Health. Email: a.mcrae@alfred.org.au
NMBA Safer Practice Advisory Tool for Victorian Hospitals

- 25 risk reduction strategies aligned with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS) medication management process, defined by:

- Completion with input from multidisciplinary stakeholders, every 3 years.
- Assist staff take an active approach to reduce the risk of NMBA inadvertent administration.
### Advisory Tool Development

#### Timeline 2018

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<td>Stage 1 Victorian NMBA Advisory group set-up.</td>
<td>Stage 3 Vic NMBA advisory group meeting</td>
<td>Stage 4. Development of the advisory tool through the Advisory group.</td>
<td>Stage 5. Advisory tool endorsed by VicTAG QUM and the Management Committee</td>
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#### Timeline 2019

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<td>Stage 6. Approval to Pilot the advisory tool.</td>
<td>Stage 7. Pilot Recruitment of 14 Victorian &amp; Tasmanian healthcare services.</td>
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<td>Stage 8 Collation of pilot results.</td>
<td>Stage 9 Update advisory tool and obtain final endorsement</td>
<td>Stage 10 Write up final report.</td>
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Pilot results

Fourteen rural and metropolitan VicTAG healthcare services from Vic and Tas piloted the advisory tool.

Key results

- **all healthcare services reported:**
  - the tool was useful in identifying opportunities for safer handling of NMBAs and will be used as evidence for NSQHSS Standard 4 accreditation.
  - ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the tools layout and design was easy to use.
  - plan to repeat the tool, eight plan to repeat in 3 years’ and six in 1-2 years’ time.
  - recommend the tool be available to all Australian Hospitals.

- **Completion time:** nine took 45 mins – 1 hour 15 mins to complete the tool, four took 2 hours or more (including follow-up and individual stakeholder consultation).

- **Risk Reduction Strategies:** On average nine (range 2-24) new NMBA risk reduction strategies were identified to introduce within the healthcare services. Most popular was ‘storage’ featuring the red warning statement **WARNING: Paralysing Agent** in front of NMBA stock.

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Conclusion

- The pilot demonstrated:
  • Usefulness of the tool for healthcare services to identify risk reduction strategies.
  • a strong recommendation is for the tool to be available nationally.
  • invaluable feedback obtained to improve the advisory tool further.

- Fourteen VicTAG hospitals have integrated the tool into their Standard 4 NSQHSS accreditation process!

- The NMBA safer practice advisory tool will complement the mandatory NMBA labelling from September 2020. It has the opportunity to improve NMBA safety in all Australian healthcare services.

- The tool will be available through VicTAG.

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