

Newsletter

August 2021

Member session: Medicines Stewardship & Optimisation

In October, VicTAG will host a member education session on Medicines Stewardship & Optimisation, chaired by David Liew, Project Lead, Medicines Optimisation Service, Austin Health. Further details will be provided once a date and speakers have been confirmed.

VicTAG 2021 Project Grants

Due to the pressures of the pandemic, there was no project grant round held in 2020. As such, in 2021 we have two project streams in the grant round. Both streams will be assessed in one combined pool with the VicTAG Management Committee determining which projects will obtain funding of up to \$15,000.

Stream One: Targeted project call to address common health service gaps

In this stream, VicTAG are seeking applications from health services to lead projects on the following topics of interest:

1. Medication Library for Infusion pumps

To reduce the workload involved in developing a medication library for use with intravenous pumps, it is proposed that a framework is developed to promote standardisation across Victoria and Tasmania.

2. Management of Schedule 8 and Schedule 4 Drugs of Dependence medicines in Victorian Hospitals

To develop a suite of guiding principles to guide best practice in the management of S8 and S4D medicines in Victoria, which will aim to build on a previous VicTAG document. The guiding principles will include guidance storage, disposal, auditing and incident management.

3. Thromboembolism or anticoagulation related harm

In Victoria, anticoagulants are the most common medication class involved in incidents that result in serious harm or death. It is proposed that incidents involving anticoagulants are investigated with a view to provide recommendations to enhance safety of prescribing, administration and surveillance of these agents, particularly in an electronic medicines management system.

Stream Two: 'Freestyle' projects for seed funding

In this stream, VicTAG are seeking applications for novel or pilot programs (12 months or less) that could be the focus of subsequent funding and address one of the following VicTAG objectives:

1. Support Victorian Drug and Therapeutics Committees
2. Promote rational, high quality, cost-effective use of medicines
3. Investigate and evaluate new initiatives in therapeutics

To apply go to the [Projects and Research](#) webpage and complete the Research Grant Application Form and Referee Report Form and email submissions to professionalofficer@victag.org.au. Applications close **30th September 2021**.

Emergency and Life Saving Medicines Register

A July 2021 update of the Emergency and Life Saving Medicines (ELSM) Register has been uploaded to the website. As a part of the regular review process, each hospital is requested to please conduct a check of your hospital's stock levels against the list on the [ELSM Register](#). There is a new email contact for the register, please email any changes or queries to vpic@austin.org.au

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Medication Safety Alerts

Connie Yin, Senior Quality Use of Medicines Pharmacist at Monash Health has been recruited to work part-time as the VicTAG Project Officer. This role will see Connie lead the Medication Safety Alerts Program and provide support to the VicTAG QUM Group.

There have been three alerts drafted so far and they will be available to members on the [Medication Safety Alerts](#) page soon.

Hazardous Medicines Project

This VicTAG project, led by Bishma Jayathilaka, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and a team of contributors from the Parkville Precinct hospitals, has now been completed. The project aimed to develop a Victorian Framework for the Safe Handling of Hazardous Medicines. The framework provides definitions for hazardous medicines, a recommended classification and the personal protective equipment required for handling.

The Framework and the accompanying implementation tools will be available on the website in September.

VicTAG Membership Fee Structure

VicTAG Management Committee recently reviewed the membership fee structure. It was noted that there had not been a change in fees since at least 2008 and that with salaries increasing at CPI of 2.5 - 3% per annum, this was impacting on the ability of the Committee to provide consistent grant funding for member organisations. It was therefore resolved to no longer offer the 10% discount for early payments and to increase fees at 2.5 - 3% per annum going forward to maintain current service levels.

As a result 2021/22, the 3 tier fee structure will remain:

- **Level 1 Multi-campus networks:** \$3,300 2020/2021 will increase to \$3,400/year 2021/2022
- **Level 2 Specialist Hospitals & Major Regional centres:** \$1,750 2020/2021 will increase to \$1,800/year 2021/2022
- **Level 3 Rural & regional hospitals:** \$825/year 2020/2021 will increase to \$850/year 2021/2022.

Invoices will be issued shortly.

James Dwyer, Treasurer on behalf of VicTAG Management Committee

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Council of Australian Therapeutic Advisory Groups (CATAG) Update

CATAG has now released a [Position Statement on the use of My Health Record by Australian public hospitals](#). The Position statement is to support the use of the My Health Record (MHR) in Australia public hospitals as a tool to facilitate shared decision making, optimise the quality use of medicines, facilitate medicines-related communications to ensure continuity of pharmaceutical care and reduce preventable medication-related harm including unplanned re-hospitalisation.

A revised version of the Guiding Principles for the governance of biological and biosimilar medicines in Australia will be available very soon. Accompanying this will be a checklist for Drug and Therapeutics Committees.

VicTAG Membership

VicTAG membership is open to all Victorian hospitals. Members are hospital pharmacists and medical specialists from Victorian public hospitals. Members can only be elected if their hospital is currently financial with VicTAG. Membership entitles representatives of your institution to attend meetings, vote on relevant issues, contribute to discussions and view the members section of this website.

[Become a VicTAG member](#) or email professionalofficer@victag.org.au for further information.

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, currently via videoconferencing and has an active discussion forum. If you are interested in participating, please email Wendy Ewing, VicTAG QUM chair wendy.ewing@monashhealth.org