

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND GOVERNANCE

The WA Medication Safety Group (WAMSG or the “Group”) is constituted as a sub-committee of the Western Australian Therapeutic Advisory Group (WATAG), as follows:

Mission

To reduce preventable medication related harm, and the potential for such harm caused by medication errors.

Problem Statement

Medication errors have been identified as a significant cause of morbidity and mortality in Western Australia. Those that have been identified are thought to represent a small proportion of the whole, with many events going unreported or unnoticed at a system level. System notification is important as many errors are thought to be the result of failures in the system to prevent or minimise errors rather than the result of individual actions.

Improving medication safety and reducing medication errors is challenging as it must deal with multidisciplinary stakeholders, well established clinical cultures, limited resources, and limited data. Medication errors can potentially occur in all health care contexts, from community settings to the tertiary sector, and at any point from prescription to administration.

In WA there has already been considerable activity to improve medication safety. Priorities have been identified and projects initiated by various state and national bodies, and local groups have participated according to their capacity and need. Unfortunately there has been little coordination of this activity, giving rise to the potential for duplication of effort, lack of focus, and inefficient use of resources. There was no single coordinating entity that could enable sharing of experience and understanding or development of a common view.

Thus at the time of writing, there was a need to establish a group comprised of representatives of key disciplines and health service settings, who can:

- Be identified as the peak body promoting medication safety in Western Australia;
- Coordinate projects and initiatives to improve medication safety in Western Australia;
- Improve communication and information flow between local, state and national stakeholders regarding medication safety in Western Australia; and
- Promote a culture of shared learning regarding medication safety in Western Australia.

Scope

The WAMSG will have reference to all issues relating to medication safety excluding those relating to workforce planning. The WAMSG will focus on activities that:

- Are national or state priorities;
- Are consumer priorities;
- Have readily measurable outcomes;
- Are known to succeed;
- Increase system capacity to measure medication errors/incidents;
- Promote standardised processes across the health system; and
- Promote a just culture.

Purpose

The WAMSG will:

1. Facilitate communication regarding medication safety between relevant stakeholders involved including hospital and community health care professionals, consumers and policy makers.
2. Coordinate, promote, evaluate and otherwise oversee initiatives to improve medication safety in the public health care system in Western Australia.
3. Advocate and seek Executive Support for initiatives to improve medication safety in public health care system in Western Australia.
4. Provide advice to the Department of Health on medication safety issues as required. A copy of such advice shall be provided contemporaneously to WATAG.
5. Make recommendations regarding the implementation of national and statewide directives related to medication safety, and to coordinate the implementation as appropriate.
6. Assess the quality and quantity of available data and information related to medication safety and take appropriate actions to improve data/information sources.
7. Develop strategies to promote culture change regarding behaviours inhibiting improving medication safety.

Composition

Members of the WA Medication Safety Group shall be initially appointed by WATAG, and thereafter by the Chairman of the WA Medication Safety Group, with the approval of WATAG.

Members will have an interest or expertise in at least one of the following medication safety, patient safety, systems design, clinical risk management, clinical governance or quality management. Cross-representation from the private sector, community or regional health services, or professional association shall also be desirable.

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman shall be elected by a majority of Group members, and endorsed by WATAG.

Each member will nominate a proxy reflecting the profile of the member who will attend in member's absence.

Modus Operandi

The committee will meet bimonthly or as determined by the Chairman.

A quorum shall consist of half the number of members.

Recommendations and other resolutions of the WA Medication Safety Group shall be passed by a majority of members present. The Chairman shall not have a vote except that in the event of a tied vote, in which case the Chairman shall have a casting vote to be applied in maintaining the *status quo ante*.

The Chairman shall provide a report to the WATAG for inclusion in the WATAG Annual Report before 30th September each year. In addition, the Chairman shall prepare a provisional budget and accompanying business case by October of each year for submission to the WATAG. The Western Australian Medication Safety Group will convene specific working groups to develop policies and drive the implementation of strategies to increase medication safety in priority areas. Participation in the working groups will be sought from experts drawn from the professions within the public hospital system and elsewhere, as required.

Staffing

The WA Medication Safety Group shall appoint a suitably qualified Project Coordinator to coordinate its activities, act as a secretariat and maintain a business office. The Project Coordinator will report to the Chairman of the Group, and shall be appointed to work within the same organisation as the Chairman.

Reporting

The WA Medication Safety Group is responsible to, and will operate as a committee of WATAG. WAMSG will report on a regular basis to WATAG. The Group (and each member) will act in an expert and independent manner, without undue influence from any external group or organisation. However, a close working relationship will be maintained with the Department's Office of Safety and Quality of the WA Department of Health.

The Group will identify key stakeholder and interest groups for the purpose of establishing relationships for communication and information exchange. Confirmed Minutes should be available to all stakeholders.