



Health Care Consumers' Association Inc
100 Maitland Street HACKETT ACT 2602
Phone: 02 6230 7800 Fax: 02 6230 7833
Email: adminofficer@hcca.org.au
ABN: 59 698 548 902

Mr John Woollard
Director
The Health Protection Service
HPS@act.gov.au

Dear Mr Woollard,

Re: HCCA Response to Enabling Supply of Medicines from a Medication Chart to a Resident of a Residential Aged Care Facility in the ACT.

HCCA was formed over 30 years ago to provide a voice for consumers on local health issues and now provides opportunities for health care consumers in the ACT to participate in all levels of health service planning, policy development and decision making.

HCCA welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the consultation on Enabling Supply of Medicines from a Medication Chart to a Resident of a Residential Aged Care Facility in the ACT. We support the proposal to amend the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008 to enable the Medication Charts initiative to be implemented.

We agree that the Medication charts initiative will prevent unnecessary duplication of tasks for doctors in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) and will improve the efficiency of health care in RACFs, leading to enhanced care for consumers. However, we hope that further development of the initiative will involve consumer input.

We particularly support the development of standardised medication charts to facilitate this initiative, as medication errors have often occurred in the past as a result of the ad-hoc use of medication charts in RACFs. Often there is not enough room for the doctor to write instructions on, or make modifications to, existing prescriptions; or the chart is too messy to read with instructions written wherever the doctor can find the space.

We believe that consumers and their carers should be able to have access to the medication charts being used for prescription and need to be able to understand the information it contains. We suggest that the development of standardised medication charts occur in consultation with consumers and their carers.

It is also important that consumers and their carers are made aware of these proposed changes and how this will affect the administration of their care in RACFs. For instance, will the consumer still be responsible for keeping track of the number of repeats they have left on each individual prescription, given that pharmacists are to be “reimbursed for dispensing a maximum PBS quantity of eligible prescription only medication”? If this information could all be recorded on a standardised medication chart, it would be easier for the RACF to manage.

With the current arrangements, RACFs often run out of medications that require prescriptions that can only be provided by a visit to a doctor. This in turn can be problematic for residents’ carers, who struggle to be able to get an appointment with their doctor at short notice. HCCA would like to see this issue considered when implementing the Medication Charts initiative.

We are happy to discuss our submission further,

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