Care at the Counter: Supporting and Educating Community-based Pharmacists Involved in the Provision of Opioid Pharmacotherapy Treatment

Craig Carmichael1 and Joy Knight2
1Community Pharmacotherapy Program – Mental Health Commission and 2Pharmaceutical Services Branch – WA Department of Health

Introduction

Community-based pharmacies dispense, supervise, and monitor 90% of the methadone and buprenorphine treatment delivered in Western Australia under the Community Program for Opioid Pharmacotherapy (CPOP). Approximately 300 WA pharmacies participate in CPOP, (around half of the registered pharmacies in the state), delivering treatment to almost 4000 clients who are registered on the program. WA pharmacists undertake a significant role in the delivery of opioid pharmacotherapy treatment ensuring that it is provided safely, appropriately supervised and monitored, and that any treatment issues are managed and reported in an efficient and timely manner.

The WA pharmacist workforce consists of more than 2800 registered pharmacists who are located across the largest state in Australia. In order to ensure that these pharmacists understand their role and function within the Community Program for Opioid Pharmacotherapy a suite of resources has been developed to support and educate WA pharmacists.

The Community Pharmacotherapy Program is responsible for the training, ongoing education, clinical support and resourcing of community-based health professionals delivering methadone and buprenorphine treatment in WA. This poster outlines the resources that have been developed to provide support and education to all WA CPOP pharmacists.

Legislative Basis – WA Policies & Procedures

To provide methadone and buprenorphine treatment in WA a pharmacy must make application to the Pharmaceutical Services Branch of the WA Department of Health to participate in the Community Program for Opioid Pharmacotherapy (CPOP) in accordance with the WA Poisons Regulations 1965. This application requires the pharmacy licence holder to comply with the Western Australian Clinical Policies and Procedures for the Use of Methadone and Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Dependence and ensure that all pharmacists dispensing methadone and buprenorphine have the competencies required.

Computerised Recording Systems

CPOP Pharmacists are required to complete daily dosing records for each client and submit a monthly report as well as maintaining details of CPOP treatment. Next Step Drug & Alcohol Services. CAS doctors can also provide interim CPOP prescriptions in emergency situations to ensure continuity of CPOP treatment.

Clinical Advice – The CAS Line

WA pharmacists are supported through the Clinical Advisory Service (CAS). This 24-hour 7-day-a-week phone service for health professionals provides clinical advice on all issues relating to CPOP patient management and provides direct access to the Community Pharmacotherapy Program and experienced medical practitioners from Next Step Drug & Alcohol Services. CAS doctors can also provide interim CPOP prescribing in emergency situations to ensure continuity of CPOP treatment.

For further details please contact:
Craig Carmichael
Coordinator Provider Support
Community Pharmacotherapy Program
Next Step Drug & Alcohol Services
Mental Health Commission
Ph: 08 9219 1896  Fax: 08 9471 0444
Email: craig.carmichael@mhc.wa.gov.au