

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.

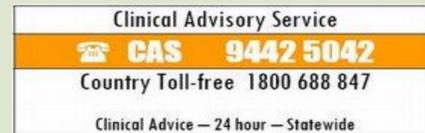
Pharmacist Online Training

To ensure that WA pharmacists have covered the essential information in the *Western Australian Clinical Policies and Procedures for the Use of Methadone and Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Dependence* the CPOP Pharmacist Online Training was developed. The original version of the online training was launched in June 2009 and completed by more than 1200 pharmacists. A revised online training was launched alongside the 3rd edition of the WA Policies and Procedures in mid 2014 and has already been accessed by over 1000 pharmacists.



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 prescriptions in emergency situations to ensure continuity of CPOP treatment.

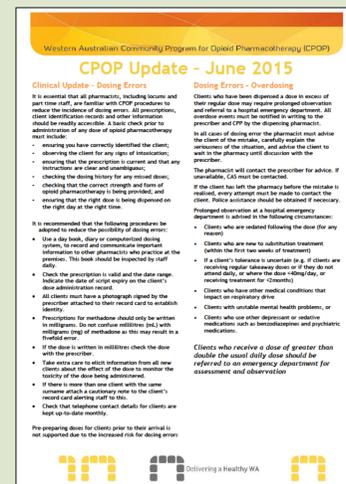


Conferences, Workshops, Seminars and Lectures

Ongoing education and training is important to developing and maintaining the skills of our CPOP pharmacists. The Community Pharmacotherapy Program arranges a variety of educational events including a very popular one-day conference, workshops, and regular evening information seminars on a wide range of topics – from clinical treatment approaches to practical responses to individual incidents. All WA Pharmacy students receive lectures on the program as part of their course which ensures that pharmacists understand opioid pharmacotherapy treatment and the work of CPOP from the beginning of their careers.

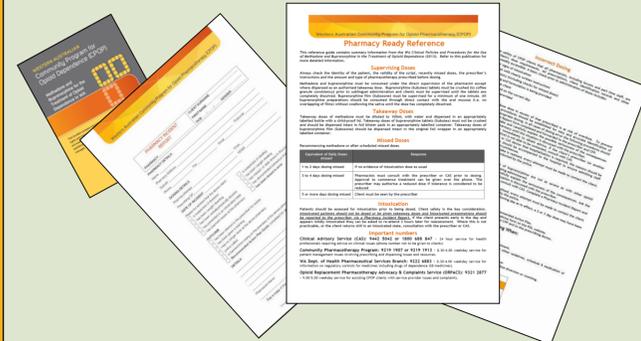
Newsletters and Print Resources

The CPOP Update Newsletter is produced four times a year and provides CPOP pharmacists, prescribers and allied health workers with up-to-date information on current topics of interest and upcoming educational events. The Update is mailed in hard copy and available electronically via email and online.



There are a many other additional print resources to assist CPOP pharmacists including:

- Client Information Booklets outlining the WA program, treatment expectations, dosing requirements and useful contacts.
- Pharmacy Contracts and Takeaway Applications providing details of the dosing and takeaway responsibilities
- Pharmacy Incident Report forms that assist CPOP pharmacists to quickly notify prescribers about issues including missed doses, dosing errors and client concerns.
- Pharmacy Ready Reference cards – laminated information sheets for display in the dosing area to provide quick access to important information.

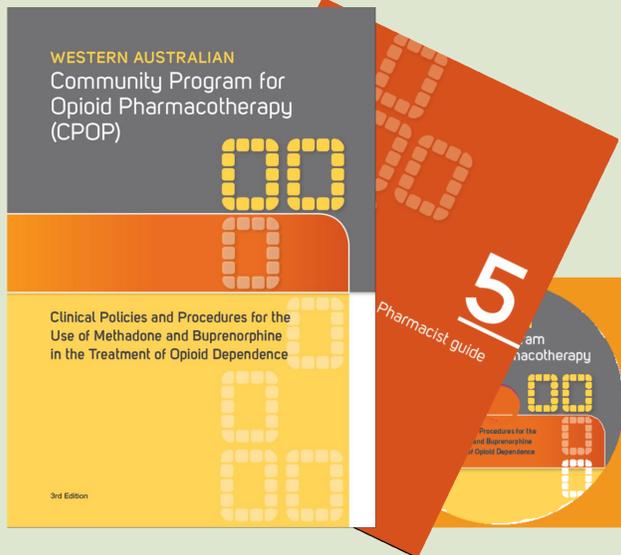


Contact Information

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

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.



The *CPOP Clinical Policies and Procedures* detail the Regulatory Requirements for pharmacies and outline the procedures for orientating and commencing new opioid pharmacotherapy clients, administering opioid substitution treatment including supervised dosing, takeaway doses and dealing with dosing issues and incidents such as missed doses, emergency prescriptions, dosing errors and diversion.

Subsequent revisions of the *CPOP Clinical Policies and Procedures* have allowed for improvements in the manual layout. Feedback from community pharmacists identified a need to quickly and accurately access that information which was most relevant to their practice. The 3rd edition which was revised in 2014 specifically separated out those policies and procedures relevant to pharmacy administration of the program into a specific "Pharmacist Guide". Spiral binding of the manual and a comprehensive index also allowed for ease of access to the relevant section.

The update also allowed for the inclusion of a CD containing electronic resources such as a copy of the manual reference materials and forms for CPOP prescribers and pharmacists.

The learning objectives of the CPOP Pharmacist Online Training cover:

- The treatment objectives of the CPOP
- The role of the pharmacist in the CPOP
- The role of the Clinical Advisory Service (CAS)
- The different formulations of methadone and buprenorphine
- The correct storage of methadone and buprenorphine
- Client identification requirements for the CPOP
- Identifying legal prescriptions for methadone or buprenorphine
- The correct dispensing and administration of methadone and buprenorphine
- The minimum time between doses of methadone and buprenorphine
- Split dosing of methadone and alternate day dosing of buprenorphine
- Appropriately responding to intoxicated clients
- Dealing with vomited doses of methadone or buprenorphine
- Appropriately responding to excess doses of methadone or buprenorphine
- The signs and symptoms of opioid overdose
- Dispensing and labelling of takeaway doses of methadone or buprenorphine
- Missed doses and reintroduction
- Responding to diversion, attempted diversion or suspected diversion
- When to contact the prescribing doctor
- CPOP Client complaints and appeals processes
- CPOP recording requirements including client dose records and pharmacy reports
- Contact details for CPOP provider support and client support

The CPOP Pharmacist Online Training is a recognised Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity accredited through the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and attracts 5 CPD credits to assist pharmacists to meet their professional development requirements set down by the Pharmacy Board. In addition evidence of each pharmacist's completion of the CPOP Pharmacist Online Training is required as part of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Quality Care Pharmacy Program (QCPP) Accreditation for all CPOP Pharmacies in WA.

Evaluations identified that the online training has improved the awareness of CPOP pharmacists of all learning objectives and work practices were improved with regards to program safety and compliance with policies and procedures.

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 methadone, Suboxone and Subutex on a Drugs of Addiction Register. The Pharmaceutical Services Branch of the WA Department of Health has approved several electronic recording systems for use in the CPOP. These software packages significantly reduce the time involved in completing the required paperwork and provide additional safeguards for checking, recording and reporting of opioid pharmacotherapy dispensing. These programs can store and provide quick access to dose records, prescription details including expiry dates, photographic identification and dispensing fees. In 2012 the Community Pharmacotherapy Program provided grants to assist CPOP pharmacies to purchase approved software packages. This increased the uptake of computerised recording systems and resulted in significant reductions in the price of software packages following the end of the incentive.