

## TITLE

**MEDICATION SUPPLY: BRIDGING DISCHARGED PATIENTS TO COMMUNITY**

## SCOPE

Provincial

## DOCUMENT #

HCS-02-01

## APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Vice President, CancerControl Alberta & Clinical Support  
Services

## INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE

February 25, 2011

## SPONSOR

Provincial Medication Management Committee

## REVISION EFFECTIVE DATE

March 20, 2019

## PARENT DOCUMENT TITLE, TYPE AND NUMBER

Medication Supply: Bridging Discharged Patients to Community  
Policy

## SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE

May 31, 2019

**NOTE:** The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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**OBJECTIVES**

- To outline the procedures required in extraordinary circumstances when a **bridge supply of medication** is provided to patients discharged from **Alberta Health Services settings**.
- Clinical judgment is not anticipated to be required in this procedure. Any deviation from the standard or expectation within this procedure must be carefully considered. Discussion with one's direct report is expected prior to deviating and documentation shall be included on the patient's health record to reflect both this discussion and to identify the rationale for such deviation.

**APPLICABILITY**

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

**ELEMENTS****1. Prior to Discharge of Patient**

- 1.1 The **health care professional** shall determine whether the discharged patient's circumstances meet the criteria for **dispensing** a bridge supply of medication. A bridge supply of medication shall only be dispensed to patients discharged from an AHS setting in extraordinary circumstances, where the patient does not have a medication supply at home and does not have adequate, timely access to the medication(s) from a community or specialty pharmacy.

- 1.2 The health care professional shall provide the patient or the family member / caregiver with the patient's discharge **prescription(s)**.

## 2. Prior to Dispensing the Bridge Supply of Medication

- 2.1 The health care professional shall ensure there is a valid **order** on the patient **health record** for the medication prior to dispensing a bridge supply of medication.

## 3. Dispensing the Bridge Supply of Medication

- 3.1 When dispensing a bridge supply of medication for a patient, the health care professional must ensure that:
- a) the order is filled correctly;
  - b) **appropriate dispensing procedures** are used;
    - (i) obtain medication supply from care unit stock / wardstock if available; contact Pharmacy if more stock is required,
  - c) the medication is packaged properly, using child-resistant containers (when child-resistant containers are not available, the health care professional must ensure the patient is aware of the risks); and
  - d) the container is properly labelled, including:
    - (i) patient's name;
    - (ii) prescriber's name;
    - (iii) medication name;
    - (iv) medication strength;
    - (v) directions for use;
    - (vi) route of administration (write out, do not abbreviate);
    - (vii) amount dispensed;
    - (viii) date dispensed;
    - (ix) auxiliary label - "KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN";
    - (x) opioid warning sticker, if the medication is an opioid under "Part A – Opioids subject to the prescription labelling provisions" of the *Health Canada Opioids List*;
    - (xi) expiration date, when appropriate;

- (xii) dispenser's initials; and
  - (xiii) dispensing site, location or unit within the site, and telephone number.
- 3.2 A final check and verification of the above information by the dispensing health care professional, or another health care professional, is required prior to dispensing the bridge supply of medication.

#### 4. Documentation

- 4.1 Each time a medication is dispensed, the health care professional shall ensure that the transaction is recorded on the patient's health record (not on the medication administration record [MAR]) and include the following information:
- a) the name of the patient for whom the medication was dispensed;
  - b) the name of the prescriber of the medication;
  - c) the date the medication was dispensed;
  - d) the name, strength, and dosage form of the medication dispensed;
  - e) the quantity of the medication dispensed;
  - f) the route of administration and directions for use; and
  - g) verification that teaching was provided to the patient regarding their medication.

#### 5. Education of the Patient When Dispensing a Bridge Supply of Medication

- 5.1 The health care professional shall provide the patient with adequate information concerning their bridge supply of medications to assist them following discharge. Every effort should be made to provide information in an appropriate language and format. AHS Interpretation and Translation Services may be contacted to support communication, if needed.
- 5.2 If the patient's bridge supply of medication is an opioid under "Part A – Opioids Subject to the Prescription Labelling Provisions" of the *Health Canada Opioids List*, the health care professional shall provide the *Opioid Medicines - Information for Patients and Families* (Health Canada) handout to the patient.
- 5.3 The information provided should include the purpose of the medications specific to that patient and may include consumer medicine information, the availability and source of future supplies, and arrangements for follow-up care.
- 5.4 When a bridge supply of medication with a limited duration of therapy is dispensed (e.g., antibiotic) to facilitate appropriate clinical care, the health care

professional shall take measures to ensure communication of the supply provided occurs.

- 5.5 On discharge, or as soon as practical after discharge, information regarding the patient's admission, medication changes (including additions/deletions), and arrangements for follow-up, shall be communicated to the health care provider(s) nominated by the patient as being responsible for his or her ongoing care. Health care providers may include the General Practitioner, community Pharmacist, and/or district nurse.

## DEFINITIONS

**Alberta Health Services setting** means any environment where treatment/procedures and other health care services are delivered by, on behalf of or in conjunction with, Alberta Health Services.

**Appropriate dispensing procedures** means dispensing procedures that are hygienic, maintain the stability of the medication, use the proper diluents and mixing procedures, prevent cross-contamination and comply with any requirements applicable to the specific medication, per Alberta College of Pharmacists *Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians*.

**Bridge supply of medication** means a minimum supply of medication dispensed to a discharged patient, to ensure availability until the discharged patient can access the medication from a usual source (community or specialty pharmacy). This is not the same as pass medications or medications dispensed by specialized clinics where the costs are covered through special funding by Alberta Health.

**Dispense(-ing)** means to provide a medication pursuant to a prescription for a person but does not include the administration of a medication to a person. Dispensing is a restricted activity under law (*Government Organization Act* [Alberta]).

**Health care professional** means an individual who is a member of a regulated health discipline, as defined by the *Health Disciplines Act* (Alberta) or the *Health Professions Act* (Alberta), and who practises within scope and role.

**Health record** means the Alberta Health Services legal record of the patient's diagnostic, treatment and care information.

**Order** means a direction given by a regulated health care professional to carry out specific activity(-ies) as part of the diagnostic and/or therapeutic care and treatment to the benefit of a patient/client. An Order may be written (including handwritten and or electronic), verbal, by telephone or facsimile.

**Prescription** means a type of order that meets the requirements of the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* (Alberta).

**REFERENCES**

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - *Medication Supply: Bridging Discharged Patients to Community Policy* (#HCS-02)
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - *Health Canada Opioids List*
  - *Medication Guidelines, March 2015* (College & Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta [CARNA])
  - *Opioid Medicines - Information for Patients and Families* (Health Canada)
  - *Pharmacy and Drug Act* (Alberta)
  - *Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians* (Alberta College of Pharmacy)

**VERSION HISTORY**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
August 01, 2016	Revised
March 20, 2019	Revised