



TITLE

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

**SCOPE**

Provincial

**DOCUMENT #**

HCS-02

**APPROVAL AUTHORITY**

Vice President, Quality & Chief Medical Officer (Acting)

**INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE**

February 25, 2011

**SPONSOR**

Provincial Medication Management Committee

**REVISION EFFECTIVE DATE**

August 1, 2016

**PARENT DOCUMENT TITLE, TYPE AND NUMBER**

Not applicable

**SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE**

May 31, 2019

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**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 provide health care professionals with a standardized and co-ordinated approach within Alberta Health Services (AHS) when a bridge supply of medication may be provided to patients being discharged.
- Clinical judgment is not anticipated to be required in this policy. Any deviation from the standard or expectation within this policy must be carefully considered. Discussion with one's direct supervisor 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.

## PRINCIPLES

AHS is committed to ensuring appropriate processes are in place to facilitate patient access to a bridge supply of medication in extraordinary circumstances, when being discharged from an **Alberta Health Services setting**, and when necessary for continuity of care.

## 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. Professional Responsibility

- 1.1 Health care professionals **dispensing** medication shall have the knowledge, competence, and authorization to provide these services, as determined by applicable regulatory bodies and AHS.

### 2. Process

- 2.1 The health care professional shall be responsible for co-ordinating the patient's discharge plan.
- 2.2 Prior to discharge, if the patient has been prescribed medication, the patient or the family member / caregiver shall be given a **prescription** for ongoing or new medications.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 A bridge supply of medication shall be the minimum amount of medication needed for the patient's health, safety, and ongoing treatment requirements, but shall not exceed 72 hours supply. See *AHS Medication Supply: Bridging Discharged Patients to Community Procedure*.
- a) For dispensing of bridging medications to be in compliance with the professional regulations, it must be in situations where it is necessary in order to meet the immediate needs for patients or vulnerable populations. While immediate need in most cases will be met with 72 hours duration, a short extension beyond 72 hours may be considered (e.g., limited transportation options in rural remote communities).
- 2.5 A medication **order** on the **health record** from an **authorized prescriber** is required prior to dispensing a bridge supply of medication.

## 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.

**Authorized prescriber** means a health care professional who is permitted by Federal and Provincial legislation, her/his regulatory college, Alberta Health Services, and practice setting (where applicable) to prescribe medications.

**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. 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 Procedure* (#HCS-02-01)
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - *Medication Guidelines, March 2015* (College & Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta [CARNA])
  - *Pharmacy and Drug Act* (Alberta)
  - *Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians* (Alberta College of Pharmacists)

## VERSION HISTORY

Date	Action Taken
August 01, 2016	Revised
<a href="#">Click here to enter a date</a>	Optional: Choose an item