

## Core palliative care medicines: Building collaborative partnerships with community pharmacist project

Dear Colleague,

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN) would like to thank you for considering involvement with the *Core palliative care medicines: Building collaborative partnerships with community pharmacists* project.

If you choose to be involved, your pharmacy name, contact details and address will be published on a list of community pharmacies committed to stocking specific end-of-life medicines. The list will appear on consumer-facing and health care provider portals such the project landing page on the PSA's website, the PHN's website and HealthPathways South Western Sydney. This will enable general practitioners, palliative care nurses and other health care professionals to refer palliative patients and their carers to community pharmacies who have committed to stocking the medicines on the recommended core medicines list (CML).

Attached, you will find an outline of this project and a non-legally binding letter of intent to stock core palliative care medicines in your pharmacy. If you agree to stock these medicines, please complete an online version of the letter of intent by clicking [here](#). Alternatively, the letter of intent can be completed and returned to the project team via email (details listed below) at your earliest convenience.

Please do not hesitate to contact the PSA Project team if you have any further questions. We look forward to your participation in this important initiative.

Kind regards,

Sam Flood  
Project Pharmacist  
[Sam.Flood@psa.org.au](mailto:Sam.Flood@psa.org.au)  
Pharmaceutical Society of Australia

*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our work in the community takes place and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.*

## Letter of Intent – Pharmacies

### Background

Most people say that, if they had a terminal illness, they would prefer to be cared for at home and to die there if possible.<sup>1</sup>

The *Core palliative care medicines: Building collaborative partnerships with community pharmacists'* project aims to support palliative care in the community and assist people who wish to die at home through timely access to essential medicines. This minimises suffering associated with emergent end-of-life symptoms.

This project is supported by funding from the Australian Government through the SWSPHN under the Greater Choice for At Home Palliative Care (GCfAHPC) measure.

SWSPHN has commissioned PSA to coordinate the project. Between July 2023 and June 2024 PSA will engage with all community pharmacies across the SWSPHN catchment to invite them to participate.

This project utilises the [Core Palliative Care Medicines List for NSW Community Pharmacy](#) developed by the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission. The Agency for Clinical Innovation's Palliative Care Network Executive Committee, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (NSW Branch) all supported the development of this list.

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<sup>1</sup> Palliative Care Australia. *Supporting palliative care patients who choose to die at home*. Available from: <https://palliativecare.org.au/palliative-matters/supporting-palliative-care-patients-who-choose-to-die-at-home> [Accessed 6 November 2020]

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**Table 1:** Core Medicines List (CML) for Community Pharmacies in SWSPHN region

Core Medicine	Indication/(s) for use in the last days of life
Clonazepam 1 mg/mL Injection	Anxiety Terminal restlessness
Haloperidol 5 mg/mL Injection	Terminal restlessness Nausea
Hyoscine butylbromide 20 mg /mL Injection	Noisy breathing
Metoclopramide 10 mg/2mL Injection	Nausea
Morphine 10 mg/mL Injection	Pain Dyspnoea

The CML (Table 1) addresses the main symptoms commonly seen during terminal phase (pain, delirium, nausea, dyspnoea, and noisy breathing). The CML also considers affordability and accessibility, by considering the need for parenteral administration and availability through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Community pharmacies are encouraged to stock a minimum of one box of each of these medicines as this is the recommended list that will be communicated in the region. Additional medicines to the list may be stocked according to local prescribing preferences and/or stock availability.

This list does not restrict which medicines can be prescribed for individual palliative patients as some medicines may not be appropriate in certain circumstances (i.e. metoclopramide/haloperidol is best avoided in Parkinson's Disease), but is one approach which will allow community pharmacies to anticipate medicines most likely to be prescribed, and allow prescribers to anticipate medicines most likely to be available for rapid supply in community pharmacies and residential aged care facilities within the South Western Sydney region. We recommend discussing any questions with your local specialist Community Palliative Care service provider.

The stocking of medicines from the list, together with improved collaboration between health care providers, can facilitate timely prescribing, dispensing and, ultimately, administration of medicines for end-of-life symptom management. This results in improvement in symptom control and quality of life of patients.

*Note (8 November 2023):*

We are aware of some supply issues with metoclopramide injection, including the discontinuation of the PBS-listed Maxolon® injection. Alternative brands of metoclopramide have not yet been listed on the PBS however, as their cost is not prohibitively expensive, our recommendation to prescribers is to continue to prescribe metoclopramide as first line antiemetic medicine. Haloperidol injection (PBS-listed) is also an appropriate alternative therapy for nausea and vomiting in palliative care while these supply issues continue, however it is more sedating.

PSA will be contacting community pharmacies to create awareness about this project and the CML.

Further information about the project and supporting resources can be found at the [PSA website: Core Palliative Care Medicines: Building Collaborative partnerships with community pharmacists Project – South Western Sydney - Pharmaceutical Society of Australia \(psa.org.au\)](#)

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## ***Aims of the Core palliative care medicines: Building collaborative partnerships with community pharmacists project***

The aim of this project is to support palliative care in the community by increasing timely access to essential medicines for people who wish to die at home or in an aged care setting.

### **The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's Responsibilities**

PSA is responsible for the overall delivery of the project and will:

- Contact community pharmacies in the SWSPHN region about the CML, and encourage pharmacists to stock the CML.
- Develop an online mapping resource that shows the locations of pharmacies that have agreed to stock the CML within the SWSPHN region.
- Maintain an online hub of palliative care resources relevant to pharmacists and prescribers.

### **Community Pharmacy's Responsibilities**

To enable this project to achieve its intended outcomes, community pharmacies will be expected to:

- Discuss with local prescribers including GPs, nurse practitioners and palliative care networks that they are stocking the CML, and any additional medicines according to local preferences.
- Conduct regular stock audits of core palliative care medicines including expiry date checks.
- Maintain minimum stock levels of core palliative care medicines.

### **Legal Effect**

This letter of intent is not a legally binding document.

### **Funding and Financial Risk**

Pharmacies will need to commit to stocking the CML for patients in the SWSPHN region. Financial risk to pharmacies is likely to be mitigated through promotion of consistent prescribing of medicines on the core list and supporting more patients to be cared for and die at home.

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You can complete the Letter of Intent online by clicking [here](#) or returning this document via email.

### Community Pharmacy's details

Primary Contact Name and Position	
Pharmacy Name	
Pharmacy Street Address	
Pharmacy Suburb, State, Postcode	
Pharmacy Contact Number	
Pharmacy Fax Number	
Email Address	
Hours of Operation	

### Optional (tick if agree)

- Commit to keeping a regular supply of at least one box of all five medicines on the CML.
- Agree to having the pharmacy's contact details and hours of operation listed on the online map, SWSPHN's website and palliative care pathways in HealthPathways South Western Sydney to indicate commitment to stocking these medicines. By signing this letter of intent, the parties confirm that the information contained within this letter of intent is complete and correct.

### Pharmaceutical Society of Australia

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Community Pharmacy

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of authorised representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position of authorised representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Once complete, please return via email to:**

*Email:* [Sam.Flood@psa.org.au](mailto:Sam.Flood@psa.org.au)

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