

## **QUMAX - QUALITY USE OF MEDICINES MAXIMISED FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE**

The QUMAX (Quality Use of Medicines Maximised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People) Program is the result of an initiative developed collaboratively by Department of Health and Ageing, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (the Guild) and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

Funding of up to \$10.9 million has been approved for implementation of the QUMAX Program over the life of the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement between the Australian Government and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (the Guild).

The Guild successfully entered into a funding agreement with the Australian Government on December 2007 to commence work on the development and implementation of the Program. This is being done in close collaboration with NACCHO as a key partner.

### **Aim**

The primary aim of the QUMAX Program is to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that attend participating Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) in **rural** and **urban** areas of Australia.

The focus of the Program is medication compliance and quality use of medicines (QUM).

### **QUM Work Plans and Activities**

The Program will provide structured support for QUM in ACCHSs, via community pharmacy, through the implementation of service-level QUM work plans over a two year period, commencing from July 2008.

The QUM work plan will be developed by the ACCHS with assistance from a State-based QUM Support Pharmacist (to be engaged by the relevant State or Territory Branch of the Guild) and the relevant State Affiliate of NACCHO.

The QUM work plans will include provision for:

- cultural awareness training for community pharmacists;
- QUM training for staff in ACCHSs;
- on-call pharmacy/pharmacist assistance to the ACCHS for urgent medication queries or after hours dispensing of medicines;
- transport support for the delivery of prescriptions or medicines between the ACCHS and the local pharmacy;
- improved recording of PBS safety-net entitlements for ACCHS clients;
- Medication Access and Assistance Packages (MAAPs) for needy patients, including provision of Dose Administration Aids; and
- enhanced enrolments in diabetes and asthma subsidy programs and home medicines reviews.

### **Role of Community Pharmacy**

The role of community pharmacy will be enhanced under the Program to provide more patient focussed and culturally appropriate services for ACCHSs and their clients. Pharmacy education support in the form of a manual is being developed by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), in consultation with NACCHO and other partners and will be provided to all participating pharmacies.

An internet-based IT claiming and data collection system will assist ACCHSs and community pharmacists to participate in the Program.

A QUMAX Pharmacy Readiness Kit which will outline procedures to be followed will be provided to pharmacies who participate in the Program. The Guild's QUMAX Program Manager and the local QUM support pharmacist will be available to assist pharmacies with any queries about the Program.

### **Program Management Arrangements**

The Program is being managed by the Guild, with NACCHO as a key partner in Program development and implementation. NACCHO is the national peak Aboriginal health body representing over 130 ACCHSs throughout Australia.

The Guild will sub-contract other organisations such as NACCHO and PSA to assist in Program development and implementation.

A Program Reference Group with membership from the Guild, NACCHO, PSA and the Department of Health and Ageing oversees development and implementation of the Program.

### **Program Evaluation**

Following a competitive tender process, the Department of Health and Ageing has engaged a Program evaluator to conduct an independent comprehensive evaluation of the Program.

The Evaluation Steering Committee of the Professional Programs and Services Advisory Committee (PPSAC) will oversee and monitor the evaluation. The PPSAC provides advice to the Minister for Health and Ageing on all professional pharmacy programs funded under the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

### **Further information**

Any queries regarding the QUMAX Program can be directed to the Guild's QUMAX Program Manager by phoning 02 6270 1888.