

# Turning the tide: An organisational approach to Australia's opioid epidemic

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## Background

Inappropriate prescription opioid use has given rise to a new epidemic in Australia.

Studies suggest that about 10% of opioid naïve patients receiving opioids on discharge from hospital become long-term users.<sup>1</sup>

## Aims

In response to this growing public health issue, our Medicines Optimisation Service has developed a framework for implementing opioid stewardship in the hospital setting.

Our framework aims to:

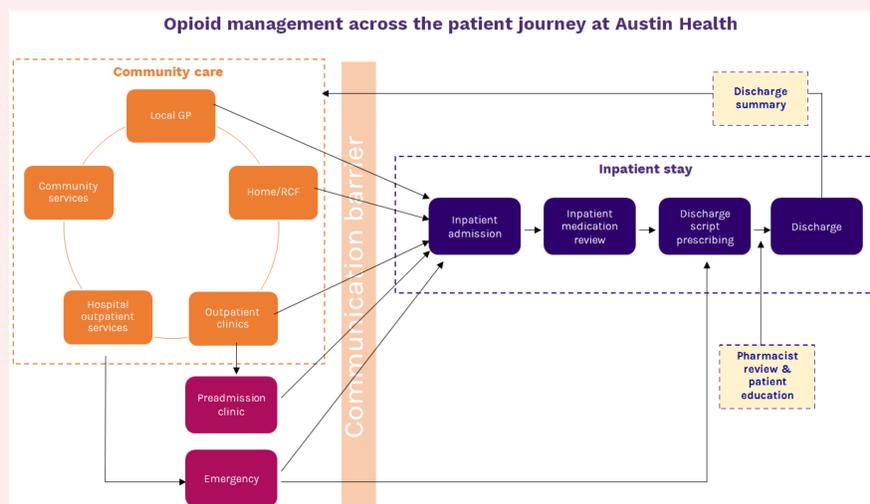
- Provide the tools to identify and approach problems surrounding opioid misuse at our organisation
- Highlight successful initiatives and existing services that support appropriate use of opioids

## Our journey so far...

### 1. Mapping the patient journey

Our first step was to critically assess each stage of opioid management across the patient journey, from community care through to the inpatient stay and back.

This allowed us to identify clinicians (including physicians, physiotherapist, nurse practitioners, outpatient staff and pharmacists) who are currently leading initiatives to improve opioid use in their respective areas.



### 3. Opioid Roundtable forum

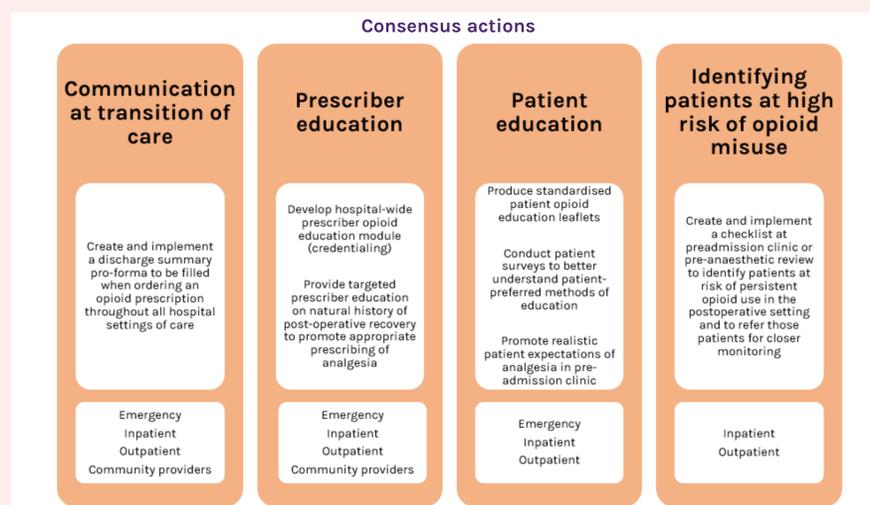
We hosted an Austin Health Opioid Roundtable, open to all hospital staff. This was a forum for passionate clinicians and advocates to connect and address successes and challenges in opioid stewardship.

Our working action plan was used to summarise the spectrum of initiatives at our organisation and facilitate interdisciplinary discussion about shared challenges and possible paths forward.

### 2. Working action plan

Through extensive collaboration with relevant clinicians, we developed a working action plan that illustrates:

- What we understand to be problems with opioid management around the hospital
- What are our current practices
- What interventions are in progress
- What opportunities there are for improvement
- How we can assess if our interventions are working



### 4. Consensus & action plan

From the consensus derived at our Roundtable, we created a document that highlights our hospital's priority areas for optimal opioid management. These include: communication at transition of care; prescriber & patient education; and identifying patients at high risk of opioid misuse.

This document also outlines our organisation's action plan for improvements and projects that will be pursued in the coming year.

## Conclusion

Our consensus approach to developing an opioid stewardship framework allows for replicability, and could be a powerful tool in helping other hospitals to achieve their goals for providing optimal opioid care.



## Contact

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## Reference

1. Stark N, Kerr S, Stevens J. Prevalence and predictors of persistent post-surgical opioid use: a prospective observational cohort study. *Anaesthesia and Intensive Care*. 2017;45(6):700-06.