

Development process for NSW TAG guidance documents

In 2007, an editorial committee was formed to oversee the production of NSW TAG guidance documents. The process of guidance development described here, applies to all documents written during and after 2007. It replaces the process of development of guidance documents conducted prior to 2007.

NSW TAG prepares guidance documents to help inform Drug and Therapeutics Committees in NSW hospitals. Guidance will usually be in the form of a Position Statement, which is a peer reviewed document describing rational, evidence-based use of a medicine at the time the statement is published. Position statements are intended to provide recommendations to hospital Drug and Therapeutics Committees (DTCs) about the place in therapy of a particular medicine or class of medicines and should assist in local formulary management and policy development. Development of a Position Statement typically takes about 4-6 months.

In order to provide more rapid guidance to hospital DTCs, a process for undertaking Targeted Literature Reviews has also been developed. A Targeted Literature Review provides a rapid collation of published literature evidence to support DTC decision making. It differs from a Position Statement in that it does not provide a critical evaluation of the literature, nor does it make recommendations about place in therapy of the medicine in question. However, it can be produced much more quickly than a Position Statement, and is therefore of value to DTCs in managing formulary decisions.

Proposed topics are suggested by members of NSW TAG (representatives from DTCs in NSW public hospitals) and will meet at least one of the following criteria:

- New medicine or new indication for an existing medicine
- Controversy over appropriate use
- Use of the medicine is anticipated to make a significant impact on hospital budgets
- Use of the medicine has been associated with adverse events that highlight a need for expert guidance

After consultation with members of the NSW TAG network, the Editorial Committee will decide whether the guidance will be presented in the form of a Targeted Literature Review or a Position Statement.

For Position Statements, the Editorial Committee will identify appropriate content experts (usually expert medical and pharmacy clinicians) who will assist in defining the scope for each document. A scoping statement (based on key clinical questions) will be approved by the Editorial Committee before literature review begins and will be reconfirmed after the literature review is complete and before writing commences.

After confirmation of the scope, the development process for Position Statements involves the following steps:

- A search of published and other appropriate sources of information is undertaken according to a designated checklist of data sources
- Existing published guidelines are reviewed (where appropriate, these may be considered for endorsement rather than progressing with the writing process)
- Relevant pharmaceutical companies may be invited to provide relevant data (published and unpublished)
- A draft document is prepared by the NSW TAG secretariat (or delegated author) and is reviewed by members of the Editorial Committee
- A minimum of two expert clinicians from NSW TAG member hospitals are invited to review the document and propose recommendations for consideration by the Editorial Committee
- The final draft will be reviewed by the Editorial Committee
- Sign-off is undertaken by the Executive Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Editorial Committee
- The document is posted on the NSW TAG web site

At the discretion of the Editorial Committee, consultation with content experts, NSW TAG members and/or DTCs may be undertaken during the course of the development process.

Updated: December 2007