

Issue 4  
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**NSW Therapeutic  
Advisory  
Group**

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### ISMP Tools field test update

Field testing of the ISMP self-assessment tools is now complete and the process of finalising revisions to the two tools is well underway. A productive feedback session with representatives from field test hospitals was held on June 27 at the NSW TAG office to explore some of the key issues and concerns reported in the field testing process. This also provided NSW TAG with an opportunity to discuss proposed revisions with participants. There was agreement with the following principles for making final revisions to the tools:

- The primary intent is not to change the meaning of any questions. We are not fundamentally trying to change the tool. We are adapting an existing tool which has been extensively used elsewhere (USA and Canada)
- The majority of the modifications are in the form of additional FAQs, Key Definitions and some wording changes. We have simplified the wording of questions where possible without changing their meaning.
- "Stretch" questions have been left in as the tool will be used to help drive change at a state and federal level.
- A small number of questions have been deleted where they were deemed to be not relevant to the Australian environment.
- Issues associated with completing the assessment tools in smaller hospitals, specialist hospitals and private hospitals will be addressed in the implementation plan
- Consideration will be given to providing guidance about how to prioritise action at a hospital level.

The steering committee will meet on July 24 to finalise revisions for presentation to the CEC by July 31.

### Indicators update

Preparation of a draft set of candidate indicators is expected to be complete by the end of July. The project team has consulted widely with practicing senior medical and pharmacy specialists to help focus the indicators on areas that are important for clinical practice.

Field testing for the indicators is planned to start in August. In the field testing process, hospitals will be asked to form a local multidisciplinary committee to assess the proposed indicators in terms of clarity, reliability, validity, usefulness and ease of measurement. At this stage, no formal data collection processes are anticipated, however, hospitals may be asked to verify that the proposed data collection is feasible.

**We are currently seeking expressions of interest for participation. If you would like your hospital to take part in field testing of the indicators please contact Jocelyn Lowinger on [jlowinger@stvincents.com.au](mailto:jlowinger@stvincents.com.au) or complete the attached FAXBACK form.**

In considering candidate indicators, we are exploring existing data sources such as electronic pharmacy dispensing systems and electronic discharge referral systems. We are also considering the potential benefits of innovative data collection methods such as software for PDAs that would allow prospective data collection where other electronic sources of data are not available.

We are also investigating the feasibility of linking indicator use with attaining continuing professional development points with specialty colleges and societies in a range of disciplines.

#### WHAT are INDICATORS?

- Indicators are quantitative measures of processes and systems in healthcare.
- Indicators are "red flags" or warning signals BUT they are NOT diagnostic. Further investigation is usually needed.
- When used for self-monitoring, indicators can improve systems and processes of care... and ultimately health outcomes.