ACT Government | ACT Health

DORA Frequently Asked Questions

PRESCRIBERS AND PHARMACISTS

Do I need a patient's consent before accessing their information in DORA?

A prescriber or pharmacist is not required to obtain a patient's consent prior to accessing their information in DORA, provided it is accessed for a purpose relating to the patient's care.

Provisions for access and use of DORA by health professionals are contained in the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008* (MPTG Act). The MPTG Act authorises the Chief Health Officer to collect and store information about controlled medicines collected from pharmacies on a secure database, and disclose the information to authorised health professionals through DORA.

Whilst there is no obligation for health professionals to seek patient consent, ACT Health encourages prescribers and pharmacists to inform patients about how their approval or dispensing information will be used in DORA.

Is it mandatory for me to use DORA?

The use of DORA by health professionals is not mandatory at this stage. However, all eligible prescribers and pharmacists are urged to use DORA as a new part of their clinical practice, with the aim of minimising potential harms.

Can other health professionals look at my own personal patient information in DORA?

Health professionals with access to DORA will have both a health professional profile and a patient profile in DORA. A health professional will only be able to access their own health professional profile, however any health professional with DORA access may view any patient profile.

DORA keeps a log of all users who have viewed a patient's profile in the viewing history tab, which is visible to all DORA users. Health professionals are obligated to only access information in DORA for a patient under their care.

A record in DORA is a health record and is protected by law under the *Health Records (Access and Privacy) Act 1997*. The *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008* outlines acceptable use and offences related to this information. Strict penalties apply for any person found to be inappropriately accessing or using DORA information.

Does DORA tell me whether I can or cannot prescribe or dispense a medicine?

DORA contains information about a patient's controlled medicine dispensing history and any ACT prescriber approvals that are in place for them.

DORA may also display cautionary prompts for health professionals for some of their patients.

DORA does not generate automatic alerts or instructions to a prescriber or pharmacist about whether to prescribe or dispense a medicine for a person. A prescriber or pharmacist should review a person's dispensing history each time they view a patient's record in DORA to ascertain whether it is appropriate to prescribe or supply a controlled medicine to the person.

Prescribers and pharmacists should contact the HPS if they have any concerns regarding a patient's approval or dispensing history.

How do I search patient records in DORA?

The **Search for Patient** field at the top right of the DORA application allows you to search for any patient that is recorded in the ACT Health Drugs and Poisons Information System (DAPIS). This field allows you to search for patients using: first name, surname, partial first name and last name, date of birth, suburb and postcode. The search will commence when the Search button is clicked or Enter is pressed. The top 10 search results will be displayed, and you can navigate the remaining profiles using the Next button.

To open a patient record from the search results list, left click on the patient name hyperlink to open in the current page. Alternatively, right click on the patient name hyperlink and choose "Open in New Tab" to open the linked page in a new tab (if your browser supports tabs), or right click on the patient name hyperlink and choose "Open in New Window" to open the linked page in a new window.

Health Professionals are advised to conduct multiple searches for a new patient using different parameters (for example; a search using date of birth, followed by a search using partial first name and last name) as there may be duplicate patient profiles in DORA due to data entry errors or differences between medical practice and pharmacy sites.

Refer to the DORA User Manual for full instructions for how to use DORA.

Can I correct a record in DORA if I believe it is incorrect?

Information in DORA is sourced from records created at medical practices and pharmacies. Therefore, duplicate patient profiles, data gaps or errors may appear due to data entry errors or differences between medical practice and pharmacy sites.

If a health professional believes there is an error in a dispensing or CHO approval record in DORA or observe duplicate patient profiles, they should contact the Health Protection Service on (02) 5124 9208 or pss@act.gov.au to arrange a correction.

Will DORA limit my patient's access to pain medications?

DORA is not intended to prevent prescribers or pharmacists from prescribing or dispensing a medicine where there is a legitimate clinical need for a medicine and where a prescriber is authorised to prescribe a controlled medicine for a person.

Pharmacists and prescribers are encouraged to complete the DORA eLearning course to learn how to use DORA as a clinical support tool.

Can a patient opt out of having their information in DORA?

Patients are not able to opt out of their controlled medicine approval or dispensing information held by ACT Health being displayed in DORA.

Dispensing information displayed in DORA is obtained from pharmacy dispensing systems. All ACT pharmacies must report all controlled medicine supplies to the Chief Health Officer under the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008* (MPTG Act). The MPTG Act in turn authorises the Chief Health Officer to collect and store this information on a secure database, and disclose the information to authorised health professionals through DORA.

Does DORA include dispensing information about private prescriptions?

DORA contains information about all controlled medicines dispensing events for ACT patients, irrespective of whether the medicine is subsidised on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) or paid for privately by the patient.

Does DORA have a lock out period?

Yes, DORA will log out after 2 minutes of inactivity. This is a security feature to guard against unauthorised people viewing patient information in DORA within a clinical environment, such as a hospital ward or pharmacy dispensary.

Can intern doctors or pharmacists use DORA?

Yes, intern doctors and pharmacists can apply to access DORA. The use of DORA by an intern pharmacist or doctor must be for a purpose consistent with their limited authorisation to prescribe or supply medicines under the MPTG Act, respectively.