ACT Government | ACT Health

DORA
Information for Prescribers and Pharmacists

DAPIS Online Remote Access (DORA) is a secure real time prescription monitoring website that allows prescribers and pharmacists to look up information about their patient relating to their use of controlled medicines. DORA is an extension of the Drugs and Poisons Information System (DAPIS), which has been in use by the Health Protection Service (HPS) since 2014 as its prescription monitoring system.

DORA is intended to support clinical decision making by enabling health professionals to better identify and manage patients who may be exhibiting signs of drug dependency, such as 'doctor shopping'.

DORA has been introduced to improve the safety of ACT patients by giving prescribers and pharmacists valuable information before they write or dispense a prescription for a controlled medicine.

Why is DORA being implemented?

Australia has a growing national problem with the misuse and abuse of pharmaceuticals. The number of harms including deaths from prescription medicines has increased and is now higher than illegal drugs.

Whilst opioids have a legitimate place in the treatment of pain, the prescribing of opioids and associated harms continue to rise across Australia. The number of patients who have been prescribed opioids increased by 20% over a four year period from 2010/11 to 2014/15[1].

Controlled medicines are associated with increased risk of harm due to their potential for abuse, addiction and overdose. Controlled medicines include strong opioids used for pain such as oxycodone and morphine and stimulants used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) such as dexamfetamine.

The ACT Government implemented DORA in March 2019 in an effort to reduce the growing harms associated with pharmaceutical abuse and misuse.

Real Time Prescription Monitoring (RTPM) systems

RTPM systems are used across the world to assist regulatory agencies as well as prescribers, to detect and minimise prescription drug abuse[2]. When delivered with appropriate training and education, RTPM systems overseas have been associated with a sustained reduction in

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[1] Non-medical use of pharmaceuticals: Trends, harms and treatment 2006-07 to 2016-16 published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Dec 2017. https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/d35a8ea3-e504-4cf2-8e72-d8e12f22d7ac/aihw-hse-195.pdf.

[2] Gomes, T. et al. Impact of legislation and a prescription monitoring program on the prevalence of potentially inappropriate prescriptions for monitored drugs in Ontario: a time series analysis. *CMAJ Open*. 2014; 2(4): 256-261

opioid prescribing behaviours suggestive of misuse[2,3].

Coroners around Australia, including the ACT, have called for jurisdictions to implement RTPM systems. ACT DORA is based on a similar real time prescription monitoring system that has been used in Tasmania since 2011. Tasmanian DORA has been linked to a reduction in prescription drug related deaths in Tasmania, from 32 deaths in 2007 to 15 in 2013[4].

The Australian Government also plans to implement a national real time prescription monitoring (RTPM) system from 2019. The ACT Government is supportive of national RTPM and plans to adopt full national RTPM functionality in the future following the initial DORA rollout.

What information is recorded in the system?

DORA contains information about controlled medicines that have been dispensed in any state or territory for ACT patients.

Specifically, information will appear in DORA for controlled medicines that have been dispensed from an ACT pharmacy, regardless of a person's address. Information will also appear in DORA for controlled medicines that have been dispensed interstate for ACT residents.

DORA also displays any ACT prescriber approvals that are in place for a patient.

DORA may also display cautionary prompts for health professionals for some patients. Prescribers and pharmacists should contact the HPS if they have any concerns regarding a patient's approval or dispensing history.

Prescription-only (schedule 4) medicines are not included in DORA at this stage, however the Minister may determine that information about other medicines be included in DORA in the future.

Voluntary use of 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.

Whilst the use of DORA is not mandatory, prescribers are still required to seek Chief Health Officer (CHO) approval prior to prescribing a controlled medicine for continuing treatment or where treatment is to continue greater than two months, or where the patient is drug-dependent.

Pharmacists should also check a prescriber has a valid approval in place prior to dispensing a controlled medicine in the ACT.

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[3] Islam, M. M. , & McRae, I. S.. An inevitable wave of prescription drug monitoring programs in the context of prescription opioids: pros, cons and tensions. *BMC Pharmacology and Toxicology*. 2014; 15: 46

[4] Reynolds A, Boyles P. Clinical care and regulation of opioid use. The Tasmanian model. *Medicine Today*. 2017; 18(3 Suppl)17-21.

Real time information in DORA

Most of the information in DORA is displayed in real time, immediately after a prescription has been dispensed in a pharmacy. Information is available in real time where prescriptions are dispensed from a pharmacy that uses compliant software. As of March 2019, this includes almost all ACT community pharmacies and some private hospital pharmacies.

Where a pharmacy is not able to report information in real time, there may be up to a 9 day time lag in the dispensing information being viewable in DORA within the patient's record.

DORA does not contain information about prescriptions written that have not been dispensed in a pharmacy.

Accessing DORA

All prescribers of controlled medicines and pharmacists may apply to access DORA to support ACT patient care. This includes prescribers or pharmacists working in another state or territory. Prescribers include doctors, dentists and some nurse practitioners.

To register to use DORA, please visit the DORA website https://dora.act.gov.au/ and follow the link to register, using a device with a PKI certificate installed and appropriately configured*.

Please note some users with a PKI certificate may experience initial difficulties accessing the website due to configuration of the certificate on their device. Should you experience difficulties in accessing the site, please refer to instructions on the ACT Health website to assist you with certificate set up. For further assistance, please contact the Health Protection Service for support on 02 5124 9208 or pss@act.gov.au.

For more information about how to register for DORA, see the DORA Registration Guide.

Prescribers using Medical Director®, Best Practice® or Genie® practice management systems may also access DORA via a new SmartForm that has been made available by the HPS for prescribers to seek CHO approval.

Prescribers are asked to declare on the SmartForm whether they have checked DORA prior to submitting their application.

*Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) certificates

To access the DORA website, health professionals will need to use a device with a NASH PKI certificate installed. A NASH PKI certificate is used to secure the connection from DORA to the health professional's computer in order to ensure the security of patient records.

DORA utilises the same NASH PKI certificate that the Department of Human Services uses for securing My Health Record. If a health professional can access My Health Record on their computer, then they can also access DORA.

For more information about NASH PKI certificates, including information about how to obtain a NASH PKI certificate, visit the Department of Human Services – Medicare website.

Privacy

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.

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring the security of patient data within DORA. DORA has undergone rigorous security testing and complies with the ACT Government Protective Security Policy Framework and the ICT Security Policy.

Patient Consent

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

Data entry and accuracy

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.

It is very important that prescribers, practice staff, pharmacists and pharmacy staff enter complete and accurate information in their practice or dispensing systems. For pharmacists and pharmacy staff, this includes ensuring that a patient's name, date of birth and address and prescriber name is entered correctly into their dispensing software when a controlled medicine prescription is dispensed.

Gaps or errors in practice or pharmacy dispensing information can lead to data errors in DORA, which could compromise patient care by another DORA user.

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.

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

Opioid maintenance treatment

DORA contains *dispensing* events for patients receiving opioid maintenance treatment (methadone or buprenorphine), however does not include daily *dosing* information.

Pharmacies record dispensing information for opioid maintenance treatment differently. Therefore there will be variation in the way in which supplies of methadone or buprenorphine appear in DORA, depending on where a patient receives their treatment. For example, supplies of methadone may be recorded by the pharmacy as a complete monthly prescription, or multiple separate doses.

Where DORA shows that opioid maintenance treatment has been dispensed for a patient, the patient may not have actually received their dose, or discontinued treatment.

It is important that prescribers and pharmacists are aware of the above issues when interpreting information for opioid maintenance treatment, to reduce the potential for harmful overdose.

DORA should never be used to confirm a dosing history for a patient. A prescriber or pharmacist should always check with the patient's dosing site.

DORA health professional training and resources

ACT Health has developed a DORA eLearning course to assist prescribers and pharmacists in using DORA. The course is available online and is designed to take approximately 25 minutes to complete.

The eLearning course has received Continuing Professional Development (CPD) accreditation for pharmacists and general practitioners. Full details are below:

For pharmacists

This activity has been accredited for 0.5 hour of Group 1 CPD (or 0.5 CPD credits), suitable for inclusion in an individual pharmacist's CPD plan, which can be converted 0.5 hour of Group 2 CPD (1 CPD credit) upon successful completion of relevant assessment activities.

For general practitioners

This activity has received RACGP accreditation for Category 2 Activity CPD points in the QI & CPD Program for 2017 – 2019 Triennium.

In addition to the eLearning course, the DORA User Manual has be developed to assist prescribers and pharmacists in accessing and utilising the DORA web application.