

Date: 17 September 2012

## **New guidelines – reducing the need for blood transfusions and delivering better outcomes for patients**

The first three modules of the National Blood Authority's *Patient Blood Management Guidelines* will be officially launched by Australia's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Baggoley on Wednesday 19 September at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra.

The new patient-focused guidelines are part of a nationally coordinated approach to patient blood management and aim to reduce inappropriate transfusions and deliver better outcomes for patients. These have been approved by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and are supported by all Australian governments.

Mr Leigh McJames, National Blood Authority's General Manager, said "while blood transfusions are a recognised life-saving part of medical treatment, they can also be associated with adverse events and poorer outcomes for some patient groups. These guidelines provide healthcare professionals with the latest evidence-based approach to managing patients to minimise unnecessary exposure to transfusions where possible and deliver better outcomes for patients."

The guidelines have been developed, by experts from clinical speciality colleges, societies and consumer representatives working with the NBA. The first three modules are: (1) *Critical Bleeding/Massive Transfusion*, (2) *Perioperative* and (3) *Medical*.

The first module, *Critical Bleeding/Massive Transfusion* provides support for healthcare professionals in managing patients with critical bleeding requiring massive transfusion and the second module, *Perioperative*, offers guidance on the patient's blood management prior, during and after surgery. The third module, *Medical* focuses on patients with acute or chronic medical conditions requiring ongoing treatment with blood and/or blood products. When complete the guidelines will be made up of six modules. The fourth module, which focuses on critical care, is expected to be published in early 2013, with the obstetrics and paediatrics/neonates modules to follow.

The Chair of the reference group responsible for preparing the perioperative module, Associate Professor Larry McNicol, said "patients awaiting elective surgery, especially where blood loss is anticipated, should have investigations for iron deficiency and anaemia which, if found, should be corrected prior to surgery. The surgery should be scheduled to allow adequate time to make these patients fit for surgery".

"Patients who are better prepared for surgery have better recovery rates, so we know that following these guidelines will result in better patient care," he said.

This patient-focused approach to blood management has already been tested in Western Australia. As a result, WA's use of blood transfusions per 1000 of the population fell from 30.5 in 2007-08 to 27.5 in 2011-12. (The national average was 35.7 per 1000 for 2011-12).

The guidelines are available free of charge from the National Blood Authority's website [www.nba.gov.au](http://www.nba.gov.au). Following the event podcasts of the launch will also be available at the NBA's website.

### **Launch Details**

**What:** Launch of Patient Blood Management Guidelines

**Where:** National Portrait Gallery, King Edward Terrace, Parkes, ACT

**When:** Wednesday 19 September

**Time:** 1pm (Leigh McJames, General Manager of the National Blood Authority, will be available for media interview from 12:30pm at the National Portrait Gallery)

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**For more media interviews or further information please contact:**

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