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An Australian Government Initiative

How the ACOP Program Improves Compliance under the New Aged Care Act

1. Supports the Statement of Rights: Safe, High-Quality Care

The new Statement of Rights under the Act enshrines every older person's right to safe, quality, and evidence-based care.

- On-site pharmacists directly enhance medicine safety, monitoring, and review, which helps protect residents from harm caused by inappropriate or unsafe medication use.
- This addresses a major risk area that was repeatedly highlighted by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Compliance link:

- Aligns with the Act's focus on safety, dignity, and prevention of harm.
- Demonstrates the provider's "reasonable steps" to ensure safe and high-quality care delivery.

2. Addresses Quality Standards – Especially Standards 3 & 5 (Clinical Care and Medication Safety)

The Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards (2025) include a new Medication Safety Standard, plus enhanced clinical care requirements.
The ACOP model enables providers to:

- Conduct regular medication reviews and reconciliation on admission, transfer, and discharge.
- Detect, document, and resolve medication-related incidents.
- Support antimicrobial stewardship, deprescribing, and rational use of medicines.
- Provide staff education and clinical governance support.

Compliance link:

- Meets Quality Standards requirements for medication management, risk mitigation, and workforce competence.
- Strengthens the provider's clinical governance and continuous improvement systems.

3. Improves Governance and Reporting Obligations

Under the new Act, providers must demonstrate:

- Effective clinical governance, including oversight of high-risk areas like medicines.
- Data use and reporting to monitor safety and quality.

ACOP pharmacists can:

- Generate reports on medicine incidents, polypharmacy trends, and antibiotic use.
- Feed data into governance meetings and Quality Indicator reporting.

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- Support compliance with the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) by investigating and documenting medication-related incidents.

Compliance link:

- Strengthens governance systems under provider registration and accountability rules.
- Provides an auditable trail showing continuous quality improvement.

4. Supports Workforce Capability and Training Obligations

The new regulatory framework requires providers to ensure staff are suitably qualified, trained, and supervised.

- Pharmacists on site can mentor care staff, nurses, and even GPs on safe prescribing and administration.
- Builds organisational capability in medicines stewardship, aligning with the broader national Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) agenda.

Compliance link:

- Meets workforce training and competence obligations under the Act.
- Reduces compliance risk from medication errors due to insufficient staff knowledge.

5. Improves Open Disclosure and Incident Management

Under the new Act, providers must have robust systems for open disclosure and incident management.

- On-site pharmacists help identify and classify medication-related incidents early.
- They can assist with root-cause analysis and transparent communication with residents/families.

Compliance link:

- Demonstrates proactive risk management and responsiveness under the Incident Management and Complaints obligations.

6. Enhances Integration with Broader Health System Obligations

The new framework emphasises integration, continuity, and coordination across care settings.

- On-site pharmacists bridge the gap between aged care, hospitals, community pharmacies, and GPs.
- They improve transitions of care, which are a high-risk period for medication misadventure.

Compliance link:

- Supports compliance with new transition and coordination obligations under the Aged Care Rules.
- Reduces hospitalisation risks — a key quality and safety metric.

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