

## Suggested strategy for developing a COPD Action Plan

COPD Action Plans aim to help your patient recognise an exacerbation earlier and take action to reduce the severity and duration. To be successful it is essential that you discuss the plan with your patient and review and adjust if needed during clinic appointments and admissions. They work best when provided with self-management education and when rehearsed regularly. Nursing and allied health staff can facilitate the development of the plan however decisions about medication changes must be made by a doctor.

- Step 1** Ask patient about previous exacerbations and action plan use. Identify symptoms (infective / non-infective), treatment, outcomes.
- Step 2** Decide what actions this patient and carer need to do and are safely capable of doing prior to urgent medical review\* (e.g. start steroids and antibiotic, start steroids or start antibiotic).  
\* Early General Practitioner (GP) review is always advised. Check GP access issues.
- Step 3** Complete “What to do section” after considering increased reliever dose, frequency and delivery method, antibiotic choice and steroid regime. Write “Use if” instructions on the plan to individualise it if needed (e.g. antibiotic “Use if mucus turns green”).
- Step 4** Provide or arrange for prescriptions for extra medications to use with the Plan (e.g. ask GP or specialist to prescribe).
- Step 5** Sign and date the plan and note if CO2 retainer (bottom of page 1).
- Step 6** Complete page 2: Regular inhalers, Oxygen, Health care provider details and lung function. Nurses and allied health staff as well as doctors, can complete this page as it is a list of current inhalers, not an instruction to change them.
- Step 7** Explain plan to patient and carer including signs to watch for and actions to take. Ask them to sign the plan and keep it somewhere visible at home (on the fridge).
- Step 8** Copy the plan and file in medical record (correspondence). Give patient a second copy to give to the GP or specialist or send directly.