

- **OST Claims**
- **Early Access to Repeat Prescriptions**
- **Multi-compartment Compliance Aids (MCA's)**
- **Dermovate & Eumovate Packaging**
- **Winners!**



A timely reminder to ensure that claims for OST submitted for payment are accurate

In common with other professional groups in contract with the NHS, payments are routinely subjected to scrutiny and audit by Payment Verification (PV), a subdivision of National Services Scotland. The use of the NEO system to manage payments for the Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) service was a recent modification and although based on the version used to deal with needle exchange, has still to be exposed to scrutiny by PV. Going forward, since it is highly probable that this element could well be scrutinised by PV in the near future, it would be prudent for contractors to apply additional rigour and extra vigilance to the process to ensure the veracity of the claim prior to submission.

The answer is NO! NO! NO! Thrice NO!!!

An explanation to those pharmacies who had requested early access to repeat prescriptions used to fill Multi-compartment Compliance Aids (MCAs) earlier than anticipated. Several GP practices reported being approached in early November to provide scripts due to be issued in December, some 4 weeks ahead of the due date. Although the issue did engender a degree of sympathy, it could not be supported for the following reasons –

- Real risk of patient care being compromised – the stability of medication stored in an MCA for a period in excess of 4 weeks could be adversely affected resulting in the active ingredient being less therapeutically effective than if the product had been kept in its original packaging.
- High risk of additional waste being generated due to the greater likelihood of changes occurring over this extended period. This could question pharmacy involvement in the repeat prescriptions process upsetting the fragile peace that currently prevails.
- Generation of additional workload outwith pharmacy impacting on teams already under pressure. Disruption of an established work schedule for a 2 day holiday is difficult to justify.
- An estimate of anticipated workload could have been derived from comparing last year's activity levels against this year's, considering whether any trend - upwards, downwards or static – can be discerned then used to plan staffing levels and skill mix to meet projected demand. It's a stressful time of year for all concerned but it would have been inappropriate to add to existing pressures that could have been managed by Community Pharmacists applying their skills and expertise through Pharmacy First and the greater opportunities arising from the wider interpretation and extended scope of the Urgent Supply initiative.



A gentle reminder – please do not promote the use of Multi-compartment Compliance Aids (MCA's)

Despite advice to the contrary, certain pharmacies persist in promoting the use of MCA's by advertising they have capacity to take on additional patients. To avoid any misunderstanding or confusion on this matter, it is necessary to reiterate the CPDT's position on the use of MCA's in practice. The legacy of previous policies remains as a significant burden on community pharmacy workload attracting no remuneration for a labour intensive, high-risk activity. Many pharmacies have had to reintroduce a waiting list to cope with demand with several reporting being at 'saturation point'. The activity seriously impacts on the network's ability to take on additional services even though these attract payment to sustain the viability of the business. Advertising that medicines can be

supplied in an MCA's upsets the dynamic within a locality with other contractors forced to respond in spite of existing commitments rather than lose patients of long standing to others. Unqualified statements mislead the public and may contravene Advertising Standards Authority guidelines. The adverts are misleading in promoting the facility as 'free' without reference to the direct costs of supply borne by the NHS and the hidden costs of filling the device absorbed by the contractor. No reference is made of the patient's assessment of need. Not all medicines can be incorporated into an MCA with the potency, and hence effectiveness, of many adversely affected if this requirement is not observed. Patients and most health and social care practitioners can be supportive of their use unaware of the resultant consequences with the vast majority viewing the facility as a convenience. A decision to dispense the medication into an MCA will have been based on an assessment of need and the stability of the product once it has been removed from the ori-

-ginal packaging for addition to an MCA. This requires the product to be re-classified as an unlicensed preparation which carries additional responsibility and potential liability for the prescriber, the Pharmacist and the patient. In addition, prescribers should be able to justify and feel competent in using such medicines. It is also necessary to ensure that the patient or their carer is also informed that the prescribed medicine(s) is unlicensed. An alternative option well worth considering would be to dispense prescribed medicines in the original packs supported by the standardised Medication Administration Record (MAR) record card now available from the majority of PMR suppliers. More details will follow in the New Year but you may wish to review your current commitment to supplying medication in an MCA ahead of a more in-depth exercise to re-examine this aspect of practice. In the meantime, please adhere to the principle that a record of assessment supporting the use of an MCA has been retained for each patient and is available for verification purposes should this be required.

Extra Care Required

Concerns have been raised over the lack of differentiation between the design of new packaging for the Eumovate Cream (clobetasone butyrate) and Dermovate (clobetasol propionate) range of products. Considerable risk exists in selecting the incorrect item particularly when electronic systems in place are bypassed.



Dermovate® & Eumovate® Packaging

And the winners are...

Glasgow again played host to the Scottish Pharmacy Awards on the 6th of November with a gala evening held in the city's Crowne Plaza hotel. The event, now in its 17th year, was well attended with Pharmacists accompanied by their spouses, or carers, travelling from across Scotland in the hope of being presented with one of the 11 coveted awards on offer. Nominees faced stiff competition in each category from the array of talent that suffused the room. Many congratulations go to two worthy recipients of awards both practicing within NHS GG&C. Firstly, very well done to **Mark Grehan** of Rowlands Pharmacy, Springburn Way - presented with an award in recognition of his expertise in the **Management of Substance Misuse in the Community**. A significant achievement which relied on his personal commitment and dedication to a client group more known for their erratic behaviour and chaotic lifestyle than adhering to a prescribed course of therapy. Secondly, the highly prestigious and coveted **Community Pharmacist of the Year Award (Independent)** went to **Alison Hair**, doyenne of the Community Pharmacy within Parkhead Health Centre, in recognition of her personal drive and commitment to patient care that pervades her support team with the same passion and infectious enthusiasm. Practicing in one of the most deprived localities in Scotland, her pharmacy is a beacon of hope, her inspirational leadership continuing to have a positive influence on the health and well being of the many patients she strives to serve.

'Take-home' Supplies of Methadone and Buprenorphine

Tis the season to..... ask you to remind your clients issued with 'take-home' doses of their Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) covering the forthcoming public holidays to ensure that their medication is stored safely in the home and well out of reach of children. Addiction Services have issued alert labels and recommend these are applied to each appropriate medicine and the bag containing the completed items.



Seasons greetings

The Community Pharmacy Development Team of Pharmacy Services extend best wishes to everyone in each of the 291 Community Pharmacies we strive to support. A very Merry Christmas and Happy & Prosperous New Year.