

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

29th January 2008

The Pan-Pharmacy IT Group met on 22nd January 2008. The key points discussed are detailed below.

Electronic Prescriptions Service

Release 1

The most recent statistics show that:

- Approximately 79% of GP surgeries and 74% of pharmacies are now EPS R1 technically enabled.
- Up to 25% of daily prescriptions are being issued using the service.
- Approximately 1% of daily prescriptions are now being downloaded from the service by pharmacies.
- Usage figures are continuing to increase.

The pharmacy bodies are continuing to urge all pharmacy contractors, if they have not already done so, to contact their chosen system supplier and make arrangements to upgrade to EPS Release 1.

Once enabled, the pharmacy bodies are also advising pharmacists to use the EPS service to dispense prescriptions where practical to ensure that any problems with the system are identified and can be resolved before EPS becomes business critical. Problems should be reported to pharmacy system suppliers who can escalate the issue to NHS Connecting for Health where necessary.

Release 2

A significant amount of preparatory work is currently being undertaken to ensure that both healthcare professionals and the general public have access to relevant guidance on the introduction of EPS Release 2.

Connecting for Health will shortly be publishing estimates provided by system suppliers on when individual systems are likely to begin Release 2 initial implementation.

NHSmail

Approval has now been given for community pharmacists and pharmacies to be granted access to NHSmail addresses. The CFH NHSmail Team are keen to standardise roll out of the service to pharmacies so are organising a number of pilots to review account provisioning arrangements, help desk support and to investigate which pharmacy activities can be 'e-enabled', for example transmitting the MUR form.

30 pharmacies in the Northamptonshire PCT area have been issued with NHSmail accounts as part of the first official pilot. The NHSmail team are in discussion with a number of other PCTs to run similar pilots.

A Connecting for Health Steering Board to monitor the implementation of NHSmail in community pharmacies is currently being setup and will include representatives from the pharmacy bodies.

National Clinical Leads for Medicines Management

An update was received on the recruitment process for a National Clinical Lead for Medication Management who will join the team of the Chief Clinical Officer within NHS Connecting for Health and will be responsible for leading on medication management issues across a range of programmes within NHS CFH.

The responsibilities of the National Clinical Lead will include the development of an overall strategic proposition for medication management based on the currently planned NHS CFH deliverables, the identification of opportunities to utilise NHS CFH systems and services to address medication management issues and the identification of clinical safety issues in the design, delivery and operation of systems that impact on medication management in a range of care settings.

An individual has yet to be appointed to this position.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the group will take place in April 2008 and will include an update from the Clinical Director of the Summary Care Records project and a discussion on pharmacy information held on the NHS Choices website.

--- ENDS ---

Notes for editors:

1. The Pan-Pharmacy NHS IT Group has the remit of ensuring engagement between the pharmacy profession and all relevant programmes and work streams within NHS Connecting for Health.
2. The members of the group are: Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies, Association of Pharmacy Technicians, UK, Company Chemists Association, Department of Health, Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists, National Pharmacy Association, NHS Connecting for Health, Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, Primary Care Pharmacists Association (PCPA), Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

Press Release Approved by:

Company Chemists Association
National Pharmacy Association
NHS Connecting for Health
Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

For further information contact:

NHS CFH Press Office
Tel: 0113 280 5816
Email: nhscfh.pressoffice@nhs.net

Lindsay McClure, Head of Information Services, PSNC
Lindsay.mcclure@psnc.org.uk
01296 438402