1st April, 2020

Dear Practices,

Primary care is being asked to increase the use of eRD in suitable patients, as part of the pandemic response. NHSBSA are supporting this initiative by creating individual practice lists of NHS patient numbers identified from their dispensing information to be potentially suitable for eRD. Please note that eRD cannot be used currently for dispensing patients.

The service allows Practices to identify patients who have received the same medications in the last 12 months of dispensing data (up to January 2020). The initial practice list will identify patients receiving 1,2 or 3 medications allowing practice to start the process of moving patients to eRD, where the move is considered to be more straight forward.

Each practice should have been sent an email to their nhs.net email address last week from NHSBSA asking if they would like to receive this information and if so, an email needs to be sent back before NHSBSA will send the spreadsheet.

It is worth noting that this list will still need to be used with caution and that clinical judgement will be necessary to confirm that these patients are indeed appropriate.

We appreciate that there is some variance in willingness amongst practices for implementing eRD and we are keen to support practices that do wish to implement eRD. We have therefore put together some guidance (attached) that you may find useful to support implementation. Some of the patient information may need to be amended based on individual circumstances.

In addition to the list of patients that NHSBSA are providing, we believe that there is merit in implementing eRD for those patients who do not have online ordering set up as this will reduce their need to present at the practice. We have therefore put together some supplementary notes highlighting a potential search criteria as well as specific issues to be considered during the current covid19 pandemic, where eRD may be being implemented outside of the usual medication review dates.

The documents are:
1)   eRD prescriber guide: This contains a lot of information but it should provide you with all the information you require if implementing eRD for the first time
2)   Covid-19 supplementary notes: Please note this contains a link to the elearning which is to be used in conjunction with the prescriber guide : https://learning.necsu.nhs.uk/nhs-digital-electronic-repeat-dispensing-elearning/
3)   Patient information leaflet: This can be printed on practice headed paper and posted/emailed to patients
4)   Letter template to patient: This can be printed on practice headed paper and posted/emailed to patients
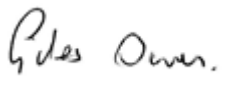5)   FAQs

These documents have been put together fairly quickly and revisions may be necessary. If you have any comments or questions, please email arti.chauhan@nhs.net and/or your Prescribing Advisor/Prescribing Support Technician.

For eRD to be successful, it is important that the correct cohort of patients are used and that patients understand exactly how the process works, the benefits will be lost if patient are put onto eRD, yet continue to order themselves as well. For this reason, a telephone conversation is recommended, this also enables consent to be gathered.

As with all areas of the NHS right now, community pharmacies are currently very stretched. Liaising with local pharmacies is paramount for successful implementation and it is important to understand how they manage eRD, for example, they may request that the patient phones them a week in advance of requiring their next batch prescription so that they can prepare in advance. It is therefore essential that practices must discuss their plans with their local community pharmacies prior to switching.

We hope you find this information useful.

Kind regards

Giles Owen
Head of Prescribing and Medicines Management