Health and Social Care Board

Directorate of Integrated Care
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To:
Out-of-hours Medical Services
GP practices

19th November 2020

Dear Colleague

COMMUNITY PHARMACY SERVICE - EMERGENCY SUPPLY DURING A PANDEMIC

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic a **Community Pharmacy Emergency Supply during a Pandemic Service** commenced on Monday 6th April 2020. The purpose of this letter is to remind out-of-hours medical service providers and GP practices that this service continues to be provided by contracted community pharmacies and that the service is available during all of a pharmacy's opening hours.

The aim of this service is to ensure continuity of supply of essential **repeat medicines** to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. The service ensures that at this time of unprecedented demand, patients can access an urgent supply of their regular prescription medicines where they are unable to obtain a prescription.

GP practices should continue to process requests for repeat medicines in the normal way and should **NOT** refer patients to their community pharmacy for an emergency supply of prescription medicines during normal surgery opening hours.

Patient eligibility

- Patients must be registered, either permanently or on a temporary basis, with a GP practice in Northern Ireland.
- Patients must have previously received a supply of the requested medicine(s) via a prescription from their own GP or non-medical prescriber from their GP practice.
- Patients not registered with a GP practice in Northern Ireland **are not eligible for an emergency supply via this service.**

Supply of medicines

- Pharmacists should use their professional judgement to determine if a supply of medicines is appropriate.
- Up to a maximum of 30 days treatment may be supplied at the discretion of the pharmacist.

- The pharmacist will make a record of supply on a Pharmacy Voucher and a copy will be delivered to the patients' GP practice.

Excluded medicines

- Pharmacists cannot make emergency supplies of Schedule 2, Schedule 3 or Schedule 4 part 1 Controlled Drugs (CD) via this service, *with the exception of phenobarbital or phenobarbital sodium for the treatment of epilepsy*.
- Acute medicines should not be supplied as part of this service.

Actions for GP practices

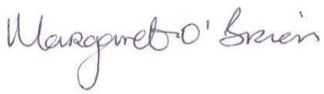
- GP practices should continue to process requests for repeat prescriptions in line with the most up to date guidance available at HSCB-Guidance-for-Repeat-Prescribing-Management-COVID19-October2020
- Practices should continue to process requests for acute medicines in the normal way.
- Practices should facilitate receipt of completed Pharmacy Vouchers from community pharmacies.
- The patient's medical record should be annotated to highlight any supply made via the emergency supply service. Ideally this record should be made within the prescribing module of the patient's record.
- **Practices should be vigilant for the potential of patients to inappropriately request supplies from more than one community pharmacy**.

If you have any queries in relation to the service please contact your local pharmacy adviser.

Yours sincerely



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Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management



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