Email to all GP Practices and Prescribing Support/Pharmacotherapy Teams

11th March 2020

It is normal practice for a 2 month supply to be given on repeat/long-term prescriptions and practices should NOT increase this quantity. Whilst this may be seen as a solution to move workload from general practice increasing the quantities (to 3 months or 4 months supply) risks causing major shortage issues. The current flow of medicines through pharmacy and wholesaler ordering would not be able to manage such an increase in demand. These shortage issues would then significantly increase the burden on GP practice and community pharmacy to manage, consider alternatives medicines and risk the ongoing supply of medicines to the public in Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Imagine the scenario where, for example, one patient was prescribed 4 months supply of insulin but another patient cannot get supply because none was available and the stress and workload this would generate.

There have been reports of patients requesting early supply of prescriptions, in order to stockpile - this again has the risk of precipitating shortage issues.

A national Patient Group Direction (PGD) is in place to allow community pharmacies to supply repeat/long-term prescription medicines when practices are unavailable to prescribe – such as in the Easter and Christmas holiday breaks and weekends. This PGD will also allow any community pharmacy in Scotland to urgently supply any patient registered in a GP practice in Scotland repeat/long-term prescription medicines if the practices are able to prescribed these themselves because of COVID-19.

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