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National attention received for Barrow's Independent Prescribing scheme

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National attention received for Barrow's Independent Prescribing scheme

Posted on Friday 13th November 2015

A pioneering Barrow pharmacy scheme is receiving national attention for the way it links with GPs when prescribing medication.

Ormsgill pharmacist Gareth Jones and Primary Care Development Lead Hazel Smith spoke about the ground-breaking scheme during The Pharmacy Show 2015 last month, at the NEC in Birmingham.

The show is the industry's biggest event of the year.

The talk reflected on how partner organisations in Cumbria have developed an innovative IT solution.

This solution enables pharmacists to legally access GP records with patient consent and, following assessment, safely prescribe medicines for patients which would normally have required a prescription from a GP.

NHS Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has been working in partnership with Healthcare Gateway, who provides IT solutions for healthcare organisations in Cumbria, and in collaboration with JN Murray Ltd and Cumbria Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC), to enable this service to be developed.

It is hoped that if the second phase of the scheme is successful at Barrow, this innovative service will also be developed with a small number of pharmacists completing their non-medical prescribing training to complement Cumbria's Community Pharmacy Minor Ailment Scheme (MAS).

Hazel Smith, NHS Cumbria CCG's Primary Care Development Lead, said: "The scheme is a national first and makes better use of the skills of pharmacists, enabling them to manage the episode of care for the patient. If information about a patient is available to everyone involved in their care it has huge benefits for both the patient and GP practices, and it allows the pharmacist to prescribe medication safely and legally."

Gareth Jones, Pharmacist at Murrays Pharmacy in Ormsgill, added: "The Community Minor Ailment Scheme has been a huge success here in Ormsgill and has proved very popular with patients. With the support of Murrays I have now been able to complete all the requirements and training of the Non-Medical Prescribing course and can access a patient's record at their GP practice with their consent. I record the advice given and the products prescribed and this is sent direct to the GP practice so the patient's record is updated. I can now supply a wider range of medication than the standard minor ailments service including those only available with a prescription once I have carried out a clinical assessment."

Ian Harrison, Programme Manager, e-Health Cumbria, CPFT, said: "This was a complex project that involved working with GPs, NHS Cumbria CCG and the pharmacy. As the pharmacy is an independent organisation, outside of the NHS, then there were a number of technical and governance issues which had to be resolved before the access to the GP record could be granted. The approach taken by all has meant Cumbria has succeeded in developing a safe, innovative solution which will help to ease pressure on the Primary Care service in the area."

Pharmacies can provide health advice to anyone without the need for an appointment, therefore freeing up GP appointments for people who do need to see a doctor with a more serious illness, and can also provide over the counter medicines that there is no need for a GP to prescribe.

Patients can also get advice about common, less serious illnesses by visiting www.nhs.uk or by phoning the NHS non-emergency helpline 111.

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