

Dear Colleague

ePHARMACY PROGRAMME UPDATE

Purpose

1. To provide NHS Boards, general practitioners, community pharmacy contractors and GMS and community pharmacy IM&T facilitators with an update on the progress of the ePharmacy Programme.

Background

2. Circulars [PCA\(P\)\(2007\)5/PCA\(M\)\(2007\)2](#) and [PCA\(P\)\(2007\)21](#) outlined the plans to implement the next phase of the ePharmacy Programme and, in particular, the introduction of the electronic transfer of GP10 prescriptions (ETP) between GPs, community pharmacists (CPs) and Practitioner Services Division (PSD).
3. They detailed the phases of implementation for ETP as follows:
 - *Stage 1:* GP practices produce bar coded GP10 prescriptions with associated electronic messages (known as eAMS) for the vast majority of GP prescribing events;
 - *Stage 2:* CP systems scan the bar coded prescriptions, retrieve and utilise the electronic messages via the ePharmacy message store for dispensing purposes. In addition the system produces an electronic dispensed (or claim) message; and
 - *Stage 3:* PSD start to use the electronic prescribing and dispensed messages for the remuneration and reimbursement of CPs (known as ePay) as well as providing ISD with electronic data for information purposes.

1 November 2007

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards

For information

Chief Executive, NHS NSS

Enquiries to:

ePharmacy

Alison Strath
Room GE07
St Andrew's House
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG
email:
Alison.Strath@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 0131-244 2823
Fax: 0131-244 2326

General

James H White
1st Floor East Rear
St Andrew's House
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG
email:
James.White@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 0131-244 3433
Fax: 0131-244 2326

www.scotland.gov.uk

Position check

4. The Directorate has reviewed the consolidated responses from the GP and CP System Suppliers, NHS Boards and the ePharmacy team and as a result has revised the timelines for the implementation of ETP in line with the current position with regards Fitness for Purpose (FfP) testing, beta testing and roll out for both GP and CP systems.
5. All five GP system suppliers have completed Scottish Enhanced Functionality (SEF) 2 testing as part of the national accreditation programme for GP IT systems. A number of GP system suppliers are currently rolling out the functionality for ETP (eAMS) to GP practices whilst the other suppliers are completing beta testing of their software.
6. This means that GP system eAMS functionality will be largely in place for the end of February 2008. This timescale fits in with the beginning of the prevalence period when GP practices commence collecting data for the Quality Outcome Framework.
7. The CP system suppliers are all at varying levels of eAMS functionality progress. Two system suppliers are currently beta testing eAMS and the others are either about to enter FfP testing or are still at the software development stage.
8. As a result eAMS functionality will start rolling out to CP systems from December 2007 and is due to complete by the end of September 2008 at the latest.
9. With regards eCMS the dates for testing and deployment of the GP functionality will be driven by SEF 4 testing which starts in November 2007, with roll out to GP practices completing by the end of August 2008. The CP functionality is due to begin FfP and beta testing from July 2008 with implementation due to complete by the end of February 2009.

Summary

10. The following is a summary of the developments and key points that should be noted:
 - the roll out of eAMS functionality is now underway by GP system suppliers and should be largely complete by the prevalence period at the end of February 2008;
 - development and testing of eAMS by the CP system suppliers is also underway and roll out should start from December and complete by the end of September 2008 at the latest;
 - these new timelines take into account the practicalities, including hardware and server upgrades and training requirements which are associated with IT programmes of this nature;
 - the ePharmacy Programme will continue to work with NHS Boards at a local level and the GP and CP IT System Suppliers to support the roll out and

implementation of both eAMS and eCMS functionality to both GP practices and community pharmacies; and

- good progress is being made by PSD with regards the ePay element of the Programme.

As a result of the above the Directorate has set the following **latest** dates for completion of the roll out of this stage of the ePharmacy Programme:

- eAMS by GP system suppliers – 31 May 2008
- eCMS by GP system suppliers – 31 August 2008
- eAMS by CP system suppliers - 30 September 2008
- eCMS by CP system suppliers - 28 February 2009

Actions

13. Chief Executives are to:

- **bring this Circular to the attention of all general practitioners and community pharmacy contractors in their respective Board areas without delay;**
- **bring this circular to the attention of relevant IM&T leads and in particular local GMS and community pharmacy IM&T facilitators; and**
- **ensure that arrangements are in place locally to continue to support the implementation of eAMS.**

14. General Practitioners should:

- **note arrangements detailed in this Circular; and**
- **ensure that they have the appropriate upgraded software with eAMS functionality supplied by their GP system suppliers at the earliest possible stage and by no later than the 31 May 2008.**

15. Community Pharmacy Contractors should:

- **note arrangements detailed in this Circular; and**
- **ensure that they have the appropriate upgraded software with eAMS functionality supplied by their Pharmacy system supplier at the earliest possible stage and by no later than 30 September 2008.**

Yours sincerely

DR JONATHAN PRYCE
Deputy Director