

Chronic Medication Service (CMS)

Information for General Practitioners

Pharmacy

What is CMS?

CMS is part of the new community pharmacy contract. It formalises the contribution of community pharmacists to the management of patients with long-term conditions by improving the patients' understanding of their medicines. Patients must register for CMS with a pharmacy. The pharmacist will then seek to identify and address any unmet pharmaceutical care issues and, where appropriate, document these in a pharmacy care record. Some patients who are stable on repeat medication may be suitable for serial prescribing.

What is serial prescribing?

A practice can produce a serial prescription for medication for a 24- or 48-week time period which is dispensed at the pharmacy according to regular intervals defined on the serial prescription.

Who is eligible for serial prescribing?

Patients with a long-term condition who are exempt from prescription charges on the basis of their age or medical condition.

Who is not suitable for serial prescribing?

- Patients in care homes (nursing and residential homes)
- Patients who are temporary residents in Scotland
- Patients on a number of complex medicines who are not stabilised.

How does it work at the pharmacy?

Patients register with the pharmacy of their choice. Part of the registration process confirms the patient's consent to the sharing of relevant information between the pharmacy and their GP practice. A patient can only be registered for CMS at one pharmacy at any given time. The pharmacy sends a message that will automatically notify the practice if the patient is eligible for serial prescribing and a flag will appear on the patient's record. The pharmacy sends regular information to the practice which includes:

- the patients who have registered at the pharmacy
- dispensing (compliance) information for serial prescription items
- end-of-care treatment summaries.

How does it work at the practice?

Practices decide on whether the patient is suitable for serial prescribing, the medicines to be prescribed, the time period the serial prescription will cover (24- or 48-weeks) and how often the medication is to be dispensed (e.g. every 4- or 8-weeks). The GP system will calculate the total quantity of medicines that can be dispensed for the overall time period. Practices can set a suitability flag on their system which notes whether the patient is suitable for serial prescribing, unsuitable for serial prescribing or not yet assessed.

What else is new in the GP system to support serial prescribing?

The serial prescribing information will be on the prescribing screen, with repeats and serial prescriptions both displayed on the same screen. Practices can either set up a new serial prescription or take an existing repeat item and change its status to a serial prescription, in which case the original repeat item will be discontinued automatically. Serial prescriptions can only be discontinued but cannot be amended.

Serial prescriptions can only be dispensed in the pharmacy where the patient is registered. The date of dispensing by the pharmacy will be sent to the GP system and appear on the screen linked to the item. Some screens may need to be expanded to full screen to see all the dispensing date.

PRN medicines can be issued on a serial prescription with the interval and total quantity specified. Early use of any medication within the interval, e.g. inhalers or analgesia, may prompt the pharmacist or GP to recommend a patient review.

End-of-care treatment summaries are produced by the pharmacy at the end of a serial prescription term but can also be sent as a one-off. They can also be used to request the reissue of a serial prescription.

Further information and guidance for practices will be detailed in the NES Pharmacy CMS Practice Manager Resource Pack which will be sent directly to practices in due course.

What do practices need to do?

Practices need to set up processes for reviewing treatment summaries from pharmacies and check that the ePharmacy messaging is working.

Points for practices to consider:

- How will pharmacies order repeat serial prescriptions from practices?
- How will practices review the end-of-care treatment summaries?
- How will practices review and authorise repeat serial prescriptions?
- How will this fit into the current work flows?
- Will practices proactively identify those who might be suitable for serial prescriptions ahead of CMS registration?
- What contingency plans are needed if the system is down?
- How to handle patients with a mix of repeats and serial prescriptions?

Cancelled Prescriptions

If a mistake is made (e.g. wrong patient record, wrong drug) practices should tear up the paper prescription as the pharmacy will not be able to retrieve the prescription information without a paper form with the barcode. Practices should also follow the usual process for discontinuing the items. In addition, practices will be able to contact the pharmacy directly as the patient's record will show the pharmacy that holds their CMS registration.

Patients moving practice

When a patient is deducted from the GP practice list, the practice should, before processing the deduction, discontinue any outstanding serial prescriptions as the patient, by then, will have registered at a new GP practice.

Training

Training for practices is available through each Health Board and system supplier. For further information please see www.scimp.scot.nhs.uk