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Chief Executive Officer
NHS Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees CCG
Billingham Health Centre
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21 DEC 2017

18th December 2017
Private and Confidential

Dear Chief Executive Officer,

Well Pharmacy Prevention of Future Death's Notice – Nottingham Coroner

I am writing further to a recent coroner's inquest, that Well Pharmacy has been involved in, due to the sad death of one of our patients. It is important that I share the learning with you so that we can together help to prevent anything like this happening in the future.

Following a home visit from his GP one of our patients was prescribed Amoxicillin 500mg capsules for a suspected chest infection. On his return to the surgery the GP issued a prescription electronically via the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS), which was received and downloaded in the Well Pharmacy. The EPS token was then sent to print. It's unclear whether it did print however we do know it was never labelled. This meant that the visual alert on the PMR which would indicate that the patient required a delivery was not seen by the pharmacy colleagues. There was no record of any verbal request from the GP, patient or the patient's family requesting this medication be delivered urgently. The medication was therefore never dispensed or supplied.

The patient collapsed five days later and was admitted to hospital. He sadly passed away three days later with the cause of death noted as sepsis. As the death was not expected the family referred the incident to the coroner as they wanted to understand how this happened so that steps could be taken to prevent anyone else being in the same situation.

An extensive investigation has been undertaken within our organisation and a number of actions have been taken. As Pharmacy Superintendent I committed to a specific action on behalf of Well Pharmacy to contact all CCGs and make them aware of the following information.



“The EPS system does not allow urgent prescriptions to be highlighted to the receiving pharmacy when sent from a GP system.” Please note this is independent of the PMR supplier the pharmacy uses.

I'd appreciate your support in sharing this information with all GPs, surgery teams, Medicine Management Teams and EPS implementation teams in your CCG highlighting that for urgent prescriptions a phone call is required to alert the pharmacy team to the patient need.

NHS Digital are currently reviewing the options available to support the identification of clinically urgent prescriptions however you'll appreciate that this needs to be a fully tried and tested solution to avoid any unintended consequences and is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future.

Thanks for your support with this onward communication,

Regards,

J. M. Perkins

Janice Perkins FRPharmS
Pharmacy Superintendent