

NEWS RELEASE

27th September 2011

NEW NHS PHARMACY SERVICE WILL REDUCE MEDICINES WASTE AND IMPROVE HEALTH

A new NHS pharmacy service called the New Medicine Service will be provided free through community pharmacies in England from 1st October 2011 to help reduce the cost of wasted medicines and improve patient health.

The New Medicine Service will offer three consultations with a pharmacist over a period of four weeks after someone starts a new medicine for either asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, or is given blood-thinning medicines.

The NHS spends around £11 billion a year on medicines, making them the biggest single expenditure after staff costs. However, until now there has been little structured ongoing support for patients to ensure they take their medicines correctly.

Community pharmacist Melissa Burnley said:

“Pharmacists are the experts in medicines available on every local high street. I see people who have difficulty swallowing tablets or experiencing side-effects from medicines on a daily basis. The New Medicine Service provides the ideal opportunity to nip these problems in the bud and build patients’ confidence in their medicines.”

Research* underpinning the new service shows that just 10 days after starting their medicine a third of patients were not taking it as intended, and two-thirds were experiencing at least one problem with it and also needed more information about it.

The costs of poor medicine-taking are both economic and human, leading to wasted NHS resources and poor health for patients. The New Medicine Service will support patients from day one by increasing their understanding of both their medicine and their condition, helping them get maximum benefit from their treatment and saving money at the same time.

Professor Nick Barber, who led the research, said:

“Patients who are starting a new medicine, which they may be on for life, often realise they need help and advice once they have experienced taking the medicine. The New Medicine Service helps solve patients’ problems at just the right time, and in a way that makes sense to the patients and also gives value for money for the NHS.”

Chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners Dr Clare Gerada said:

“Patients do sometimes experience problems with their medicines and, through the New Medicine Service, GPs and pharmacists will work in partnership to ensure those that need support receive it. This will result in improving the care we provide to our patients, and in turn our patients’ health.”

The service is funded by the NHS for £55 million available in this financial year and again in 2012-2013.

Ends

For media enquiries please contact the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's [media team](#) on 020 7572 2653 or out of hours 07860 643862.

Notes to Editors:

*<http://qualitysafety.bmj.com/content/13/3/172.full.html>

For more information on the New Medicine Service including a short video explanation, click [here](#).

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) is the professional body for pharmacists in Great Britain. We represent all sectors of pharmacy in Great Britain and lead and support the development of the pharmacy profession including the advancement of science, practice, education and knowledge in pharmacy.

The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) promotes and supports the interests of all NHS community pharmacies in England. PSNC are recognised by the Secretary of State for Health as the body that represents NHS pharmacy contractors and work closely with Local Pharmaceutical Committees to support their role as the local NHS representative organisations.

Pharmacy Voice (PV) represents community pharmacy owners in the UK. Its founder members are the Association of Independent Multiple pharmacies (AIMp), the Company Chemists’ Association (CCA) and the National Pharmacy Association (NPA). The principal aim of Pharmacy Voice is to enable community pharmacy to fulfil its potential and play an expanded role as a healthcare provider of choice in the new NHS, offering unrivalled accessibility, value and quality for patients and driving forward the medicines optimisation, public health and long term conditions agendas.