



PATIENT INFORMATION AT THE POINT OF DISCHARGE: MEDICINE REMINDER CHART

At the December 2011 meeting, AWMSG endorsed the following recommendations:

- 1. Medicines and Therapeutics Committees, or similar multi-professional groups within health boards, should review or implement processes to promote the provision of patient-held medicines reminder charts and a contact telephone number for the Hospital Pharmacy Helpline (see Appendix 1). These should be readily available to patients when they are transferred between care settings, particularly upon discharge from hospital.**
- 2. AWMSG recommends that the Welsh Government give consideration to the availability of the necessary Information Technology software, so that patient-held, plain English medicines reminder charts may be printed:**
 - At discharge - The current rollout of electronic discharge letters should be developed to include medicines reminder charts.**
 - In community - software providers to develop the functionality to print medicines reminder charts in primary care and explore options for community pharmacies.**

Standard and long versions of the medicine reminder chart (see Appendix 1) will be available on the AWMSG website for local adaptation.

1.0 PURPOSE

This paper is pertinent to recommendations 14 and 34 of the AWMSG Medicines Strategy for Wales¹:

- 14. Systems need to be developed for electronically communicating patient medicines information on admission and discharge from hospital.*
- 34. AWMSG will raise awareness of the risk to health outcomes of poor concordance and, with stakeholders, develop ways to improve concordance and engage patients in better utilisation of medicines’.*

2.0 BACKGROUND

AWPAG and AWMSG were requested to consider the provision of medicines reminder charts in Wales following anecdotal examples of difficulties experienced by patients when discharged from hospital. Consequently, a short questionnaire was sent to hospital pharmacies across Wales to identify both current practice and examples of medicines reminder charts and

information leaflets. The medicines reminder chart shown in Appendix 1 is based on one used within Abertawe Bro Morgannwg health board; it aims to be simple, easy to understand, clear and informative, and is recommended for local adaptation.

It is recognised that good information helps patients participate fully in concordant decision making about the medicines prescribed for, or recommended to, them by healthcare professionals. The importance of written information as an essential format to enable patients to use medicines safely and gain the most benefit has been highlighted².

2.1. Available guidance

NICE Clinical Guideline 76. Medicines adherence: Involving patients in decisions about prescribed medicines and supporting adherence. 2009³.

On transfer between services (for example, discharge from hospital) give all patients and subsequent healthcare or other providers a written report containing:

- the patient's diagnosis
- a list of all medicines the patient should be taking
- clear identification of any new medicines that were started
- clear identification of any medicines that were stopped with reasons
- clear information on which medicines should be continued after transfer and for how long
- any known adverse reactions and allergies
- any potential difficulties with adherence and any actions taken (for example, provision of a multi-compartment medicines system).³

Royal Pharmaceutical Society. Keeping patients safe when they transfer between care providers – getting the medicines right. Good practice guidance for healthcare professions. 2011².

Core Principle 3

Patients (or their parents, carers or advocates) should be encouraged to be active partners in managing their medicines when they move, and know in plain terms why, when and what medicines they are taking.

Core Principle 4

Information about patients' medicines should be communicated in a way which is timely, clear, unambiguous and legible; ideally generated and/or transferred electronically.²

Standard 15 of the Healthcare Standards for Wales requires that 'Organisations and services will ensure that there is timely, accessible and appropriate medicines advice and information for patients, service users, their carers and staff including the reporting of drug related adverse incidents'⁴.

The Health Literacy project being undertaken by Public Health Wales acknowledges the potential that optimising health literacy can have in reducing inequalities and inequities⁵.

2.2 Barriers to implementation

The provision of patient-held medicine reminder charts has been suggested for many years⁶, but they are not widely used.

Currently, most patient-held medication records are hand written. Development of Information Technology to translate a patient's hospital discharge medication or practice repeat medication into a plain English summary would overcome a significant barrier to implementation.

3.0 CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 General Practice

Medicines reminder charts are not routinely provided to patients by General Practices. A printout of repeat medication can easily be provided, but is not a plain English summary.

3.2 Survey of current practise in hospitals

The short questionnaire received from hospital pharmacies across Wales included the question "In general terms what information is provided to most patients regarding their medication and by whom at the point of discharge". Responses showed a variation in approach (a summary of findings of the survey is available from WMP on request). Respondents were asked whether a contact telephone number or advice line is included in the information provided. Nine respondents stated that a contact number was provided and two respondents stated that there was no contact telephone number provided, although one of these highlighted a widely advertised and used Medicines Information service. Of the respondents who stated that a contact number was provided, four respondents stated that in hours calls are directed to the dispensary while three specified that the calls are directed to a pharmacist. Five respondents stated that this was unavailable during out of hours periods.

4.0 MEASURES

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society guidance "Keeping patients safe when they transfer between care providers – getting the medicines right: Good practice guidance for healthcare professions" suggests use of the annual patient experience survey to monitor and drive improvement in communication with patients about their medicines when they are discharged².

Other measures may need to be identified or developed to assess the implementation of these recommendations.

REFERENCES

1. All Wales Medicines Strategy Group. A medicines strategy for Wales: Executive summary. 2008. Available at <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/371/Strategy%20Exec%20Summary%20endorsed%20AWMSG%20April08.pdf> [Accessed Oct 2011]
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4. Welsh Assembly government. Healthcare Standards for Wales: Making the connections designed for life. 2005. Available at: <http://www.hiw.org.uk/Documents/477/Healthcare%20Standards%20for%20Wales.pdf> [Accessed Nov 2011]
5. Public Health Wales. Health Literacy. 2011. Available at <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/55407> [Accessed Nov 2011]
6. Task Force on Medicines Partnership, The National Collaborative Medicines Management Services. Programme. Room for review: A summary guide to medication review: the agenda for patients, practitioners and managers. 2002. Available at: http://www.npc.nhs.uk/review_medicines/intro/resources/room_for_review_briefing.pdf [Accessed Nov 2011]

Appendix 1. Example of good practice suitable for local adaptation.

Important Information About Your Medicines

You have been discharged from hospital with at least 7-days medication. If you were given written information to take to your GP, please do so as soon as possible. Please arrange a repeat prescription with your GP if any of your medication is to continue. An appointment is not normally needed for this.

This leaflet shows when to take your medication. For further guidance please read the special warnings on the containers and any manufacturers' leaflets.

- Use your medicines only as instructed by your doctor
- Follow the instructions on the container and read any special warnings on the container carefully
- Continue taking your medication until your doctor advises otherwise
- Never share medicines with others
- Always keep medicines in the original labelled container
- If you miss a dose of your medicine **do not** double the dose next time
- Store in a cool dry place – avoid kitchens and bathrooms
- Unused/unwanted medicines should be returned to your nearest pharmacy
- GPs/community pharmacists require at least 48 hours notice to issue a repeat prescription.

KEEP ALL MEDICINES OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

Completed by	
Designation	
DATE	

INSERT LOGO HERE

Medicine Reminder Chart

Patient details	
Name:	
Address:	
Date of birth:	

Pharmacy details	GP details

Allergies

This chart is to help you remember when to take your medicines. If anyone changes your medicine, ask them to update the chart as well.

If you go to hospital, take this chart and your medicines with you.

Hospital pharmacy helpline: 01000 000000

