

Case Study - Medicines Management

(November 2017)



This case study is part of our support to the team tasked with looking at how repeat prescriptions are managed.

This work is being driven by the need to reduce the NHS money lost through unnecessary processes and medicines that are not used, which could be for a wide variety of reasons.

We are working together to help the decision-makers **understand local needs and any issues with current prescription processes**. This should mean any changes will be **more acceptable to local people**, which in turn will help to **make sure the estimated savings can be met**.

Susan takes medication for her psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. She received her medication through her GP and pharmacy before moving to West Sussex last year. Having registered at an East Grinstead surgery, she asked for her repeat prescription and was given one. The next time she put in a repeat prescription (a week before needing the medication) it was refused.

Susan tells us her story:

I asked myself how could I get my medication if not from my doctor? The receptionist suggested seeing a doctor on the next Friday (which was just before I needed the medication on the Monday). This doctor refused to prescribe it without giving any explanation. I ended up really upset, wondering what I could do before Monday. Someone suggested I speak to my consultant, which surprised me as I had always thought I had to go through my GP to do this. I contacted the specialist's secretary who went straight into action. I've since found out, that here in West Sussex, Methotrexate is specially delivered to my door and is dealt with by the hospital pharmacy. But because the surgery hadn't taken the time to tell me this, or help me in anyway, I didn't get my medication in time. I am now in the system and I had a phone call from the doctor apologising.

I also had problems with the cream I use for my psoriasis. It wasn't on my own online patient access prescription repeat list. The surgery's website states to contact them to ask for the item to put it on the repeat list, which I did and got my prescription. The following month I went to the website to order my cream but it still wasn't listed. Again, I checked the information on the site and it said the same as before. So I called the surgery to ask them and the receptionist was very obstructive. She refused to acknowledge anything I was saying, just said I had to email. I wasn't very happy with this, as I was very busy and I'd done everything correctly to get my repeat prescription according to their instructions. I did email requesting the cream be put on repeat.

To this day my cream is still not on my repeat list.

We are keen to hear about your experiences

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What can be learnt from Susan's experience?

- GPs and their staff can really help people to understand the way prescriptions and medications are processed locally. Taking a few minutes to explain can save lots of time for staff and patients
- Reviews of patient information against procedures will help ensure people aren't given mixed messages. Having simple processes and being clear is key to making savings

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