Medicines Management Prescribing Focus – April 2021

Online Repeat Prescription Ordering & eRD

This month's focus is on online repeat prescription ordering in its various forms; patients ordering their own and/or family members' repeat prescriptions online, online 'proxy' ordering in care homes and electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD).

All three, when introduced and used consistently, help to reduce medicine waste and provide a robust audit trail in the patient's record.
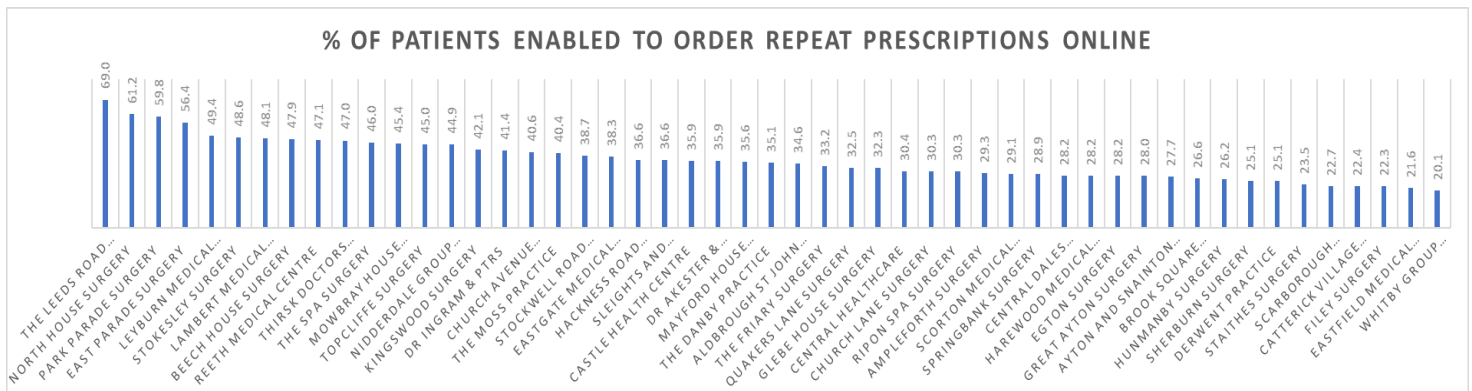
Online repeat prescription ordering by patients in their own homes

In 2018 the Medicine Management Team (MMT) initiated a project to encourage patients to order their repeat medications direct from their GP practices using online services, rather than paper slips or via the telephone. This work was carried out in conjunction with community pharmacies and their teams.

Three years on, online repeat prescription ordering has been implemented across North Yorkshire and practices and pharmacies alike report a reduction in time taken to process prescription orders, more time to spend on those patients who require support and a reduction in items being ordered 'just in case', particularly GTN sprays and salbutamol inhalers.

However, there is still some work to be done with regards to third party ordering where patients are using third party apps to order their medication instead of using the NHS app or their practice's online ordering system. In some cases, medication is ordered by the third-party contractor when it is not required, and it also adds an extra step in the process as the third-party contractors then email the practice to order the patient's medications on their behalf.

See below for a graph showing the percentage of patients enabled to order repeat prescriptions online by practice. Source: NHS Digital, February 2021.

% OF PATIENTS ENABLED TO ORDER REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS ONLINE

Actions:

- Review your practice's uptake of online ordering and actively promote use of your practice's online ordering system or the NHS App

- Inform the MMT of persistent third party ordering from dispensing contractors by contacting us via nyccg.rxline@nhs.net

- Work with your local community pharmacies to identify your patients where online ordering is not feasible or appropriate and put a note in their record

Further information and resources can be found here:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/po-why-should-I-repeat-prescriptions.pdf

'Proxy' online ordering of medication for care home residents by care home staff

Ordering medication is a routine but vital part of the management of medicines in care homes and carries a significant workload for practices and care homes. This is usually done via the paper repeat slip provided by the surgery. This must be physically taken to the surgery or in some instances the care home scans and emails them to the surgery. These requests must then be sorted by the surgery staff and transferred to the practice clinical system.

Moving to online ordering simplifies the process and means that the request is transferred directly and securely to the surgery from the care home, in a simple electronic process that is easier to process and safer to manage.

Proxy online ordering reduces:
- o The number of telephone calls and urgent requests for prescriptions – care homes can view the status of a prescription using the online ordering system
- o The need to spend time transferring requests to the computer system
- o The time spent trying to find paper or emailed requests and deal with transcription problems
- o Footfall into the practice to deliver requests and collect prescriptions

Proxy online ordering improves:
- o Medication audit trail – you can see what has been ordered, when and by whom
- o Data security – as care home staff have access to the online ordering system via their own username and password
- o Working relationships and communication between practice and care home
- o The use of EPS as care homes no longer need to see the EPS tokens

Both EMIS and SystmOne have the facility to allow proxy access to a patient's online medication account. These systems can be used with the patient's consent to give specific care home staff proxy access to the patient's online account with access restricted to medication ordering.

Actions:
Please contact the MMT via nyccg.rxline@nhs.net if:
- you would like further information or support to offer this option to your care homes

- you have already set up proxy online ordering with your care homes but have questions

- you wish to check if the system you are currently using for care home medication ordering is still in line with the latest good practice guidance
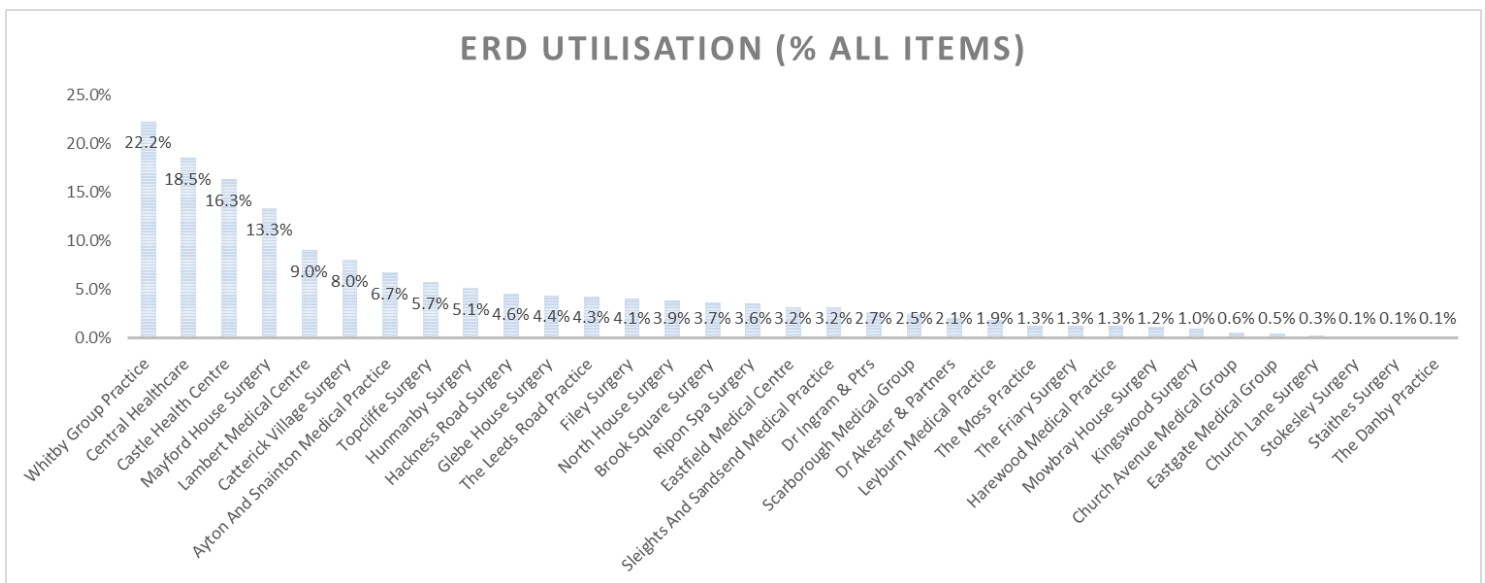
Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD)

There are many benefits to using eRD for patients, general practice and pharmacies. A major benefit to practices is a reduced prescription workload. In 2015, NHS Digital undertook an audit of GP practices and spoke to 100 practice staff about EPS 2. Specifically related to electronic Repeat Dispensing (Wessex eRD Steering Group, 2018), they found that:

- Practice staff save an average of 73 minutes each day by producing eRD prescriptions rather than paper repeats

- An average general practice saves 80 minutes of GP time every day from signing eRD prescriptions versus paper prescribing

- Practices save an average of 27 minutes every day by cancelling prescriptions electronically versus paper
- The practices who participated in the audit prescribed an average of 10,920 items per month, with 53.4% of their items being sent via EPS Release 2

The North Yorkshire CCG MMT is very supportive of efforts to increase the use of eRD across North Yorkshire, as we recognise the greater benefits and value this will bring to those involved now that the system has matured. You may already be using eRD but will not yet be realising the full benefits to your practice as these greatly increase once you exceed 25%, with more benefits being realised at greater percentages. There is no doubt that implementing eRD is hard work to begin with but investing time and effort at the beginning will help to ensure a successful implementation and the return on this investment will prove worthwhile for the benefits realised over the medium and long-term.

The current percentage of 'all items eRD utilisation' is low throughout North Yorkshire CCG:

ERD UTILISATION (% ALL ITEMS)

All practices not represented on the graph above stand at 0%. Source: NHS Digital, January 2021.

Actions:
- Review your practice's eRD utilisation status and consider initiating (if not already using) and growing the number of patients actively receiving prescriptions via this route. See the attached 'Tips for implementing eRD' document for further details of how to proceed.
- Contact the MMT via nyccg.rxline@nhs.net if you have any further questions about the eRD process

For further information and resources see the attached **Tips for implementing eRD** and the NY CCG Medicines Management Team **Protocol for electronic Repeat Dispensing.**

Please share the information in this letter with all relevant members of staff in the practice.

Yours sincerely,

The Medicines Management Team