

## **Medicines and Pharmacy issues relating to current situation around influenza A/H1N1**

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### **Resources**

A range of resources to support supply of antivirals is available at:

[www.nelm.nhs.uk/en/NeLM-Area/Community-Areas/Pan-Flu-Resources-for-PCT-Pharmacy-Staff/](http://www.nelm.nhs.uk/en/NeLM-Area/Community-Areas/Pan-Flu-Resources-for-PCT-Pharmacy-Staff/)

### **Supply of Antivirals**

There are a number of mechanisms that can be used to supply antivirals to patients. PCTs are asked to ensure that they make best use of these mechanisms to facilitate supply of antivirals to patients.

Patient specific directions: these can be written using a locally developed template (examples are available in the resources link above), or if FP10s are being used they should be annotated "convenient stationery" and only taken to PCT antiviral distribution points. FP10s should not be used unless they have been annotated. The side of an FP10 that is given to patients with their prescription information could also be used as a patient specific direction.

All patient specific directions should be signed by the prescriber.

Patient Group Directions: these can be used by nurses and pharmacists to supply antivirals without the need for a prescription, following patient assessment. Template PGDs are available in the resources link above.

Supply from ACP using clinical protocol: DH has put in place Directions to allow supply of antivirals for treatment of flu using a clinical protocol by any staff deemed competent by the PCT. See below for further information.

Use of community pharmacies for antiviral distribution: Some PCTs have found that using a small number of community pharmacies locally for supply of antivirals following assessment by GPs or at ACPs, has helped ease pressure on assessment centres. An example SLA for this service is available in the resources link above and has previously been circulated with the daily flu brief.

### **Change in legislation to allow operation of ACPs using clinical protocol**

DH has amended legislation and Directions are now in force to allow supply of antivirals to treat flu from ACPs using a clinical protocol. These Directions apply only to London and not to the rest of the country.

The clinical protocol published to accompany the change in legislation to allow operation of ACPs should be treated as a working draft. It may be subject to further change, therefore it is advisable not to distribute too widely beyond operating ACPs.

Currently there is only a clinical protocol for treatment of flu available. DH is working on a clinical protocol for the supply of antivirals for prophylaxis of close contacts.

### **Patients with renal disease**

For children under 5 yrs of age with severe renal disease needing treatment with antivirals, DH advice is for the child to take the first dose of oseltamivir and then seek advice from the a renal specialist on further dose adjustment.

### **Paediatric solution**

NHS manufacturing units have made further supplies of paediatric oseltamivir solution, to supplement the oseltamivir suspension that was included in original supplies to HPU and PCTs. These supplies will be delivered to PCTs shortly. PCTs are being asked to re-confirm delivery addresses for antivirals as some PCTs have changed their antiviral storage location.

The expiry date of NHS manufactured oseltamivir solution has now been extended from 60 days to 90 days. Stocks of solution are being re-labelled to reflect this change.

PCTs are also being asked to make sure that they carefully manage their stocks of oseltamivir solution and suspension, and use the solution first, and reserve the suspension because it has a longer expiry date.

PCTs are reminded that oseltamivir solution and suspension should **only** be used to treat children under 1 year of age. Older children should be given oseltamivir paediatric capsules that can be opened.

### **Frontline NHS staff**

NHS guidance will hopefully be published shortly. In the meantime NHS organisations should use existing routes for supply e.g. occupational health.

### **Substance Misuse Legislation and Pharmaceutical Services change**

Changes to regulations to allow more flexibility in supply of controlled drugs for substance misuse in the event of a pandemic should be laid by mid July. Changes to Pharmaceutical services regulations to allow flexibility in community pharmacy opening should also be laid later in July.

### **Template letters for GPs to give to flu friend**

DH will soon be publishing two template letters for GPs to use to authorise ACPs to supply antivirals to children, and patient groups that require GP assessment.