

English Pharmacy Board 16 September 2009

## **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

### **Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain**

#### **Professional Body Policy on Pharmacy IT**

Professional practice for pharmacists will be profoundly affected in future by the use of IT and now is the time for practicing pharmacists to evaluate the technologies that are being introduced to support the profession, to contribute to the design of new systems and to consider how IT can support future professional objectives.

#### **Pharmacy IT Workstreams**

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is engaged with Connecting for Health workstreams in three main areas, at the current time

##### **1) Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (eTP)**

The electronic transfer of prescriptions between prescribers and community pharmacists in primary care will form the foundation for pharmaceutical care in the community. When fully implemented, it has the potential to make the dispensing process safer and more efficient, and will enable community pharmacists to engage more fully in providing new clinically-oriented services.

The electronic transfer of prescriptions will be enabled by the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) in England, the Electronic Acute Medication Service (EAMS) in Scotland and, in due course, the 2DRx system in Wales.

For further information:

England - <http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/eps>  
Scotland – [http://www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/core\\_services.html](http://www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/core_services.html)  
Wales - <http://www.rpsgb.org.uk/wales/imt.html>

##### **2) Hospital E-Prescribing**

The hospital e-prescribing programme aims to facilitate the delivery of functionality to support the prescribing, supply and administration of medicines in hospitals and other secondary care settings. Some hospitals in the UK are already using proprietary electronic prescribing systems.

Research has highlighted the potential of electronic prescribing systems to reduce the risk of medication-related errors in hospital settings. Electronic prescribing also has the

potential to make the medicines management process in hospitals more efficient, to improve audit trails and the capture of clinical data and to enhance communications between hospital staff.

For further information:

<http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/eprescribing>

### 3) Information Governance

With more widespread use of IT systems within organisations, together with increased interoperability of such systems, there is an increased need for a framework of good practice for pharmacy organisations and the pharmacy profession. The information governance programme seeks to develop this framework, dealing with issues such as confidentiality, data sharing and flow of data within organisations. Information governance will have a profound impact on the pharmacy profession.

The pharmacy bodies are currently working with Connecting for Health on the development of an information governance framework for the profession.

For further information:

<http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/infogov>

### **The Role of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society**

As the professional body for pharmacy, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society is committed to supporting the profession in adopting and engaging with new technologies to support pharmacy practice. The IT agenda provides an important platform for the pharmacy profession to advance its reputation in the wider healthcare arena, where the benefits of IT use are well recognised.

As the professional leadership body for pharmacy, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society has policy on pharmacy IT covering a number of areas.

### On Professional Leadership in Use of Information Technology

- As the professional body for pharmacists, RPSGB is committed to exploring the use of new technologies – both those provided by national government IT programmes, and other providers – to support best practice in pharmacy, and to develop new services, such as those outlined in the pharmacy White Paper.
- Practical concerns with the use of IT systems are best addressed when pharmacists have implemented the systems and have gained experience in their live use. RPSGB will support the work of innovators and leaders in pharmacy IT initiatives. It will do this through its professional networks

and advisory services but, above all, by fostering a culture of innovation and thinking “outside the box”.

- RPSGB is committed to evidence-based review and evaluation of new clinical services, and the technologies that will underpin them. RPSGB will therefore support and encourage research into the benefits and safety of IT systems being used to support pharmacy services. The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust may have a particular part in this.
- RPSGB supports the use of high-quality electronic medicines reference sources and clinical content in pharmaceutical care. RPSGB will encourage its members to evaluate sources of electronic medicines information, and will provide them with the support to do this.
- As the professional body for pharmacists, RPSGB will support and engage with the development of national and international standards for medicines terminology and nomenclature.
- RPSGB will promote the principles of good information governance (IG), ensuring that pharmacists recognise their legal and professional responsibilities regarding secure and appropriate data flow of personal identifiable data within their organisations. As many pharmacists operate pharmacy businesses, this requirement also covers IG obligations under company law.

#### On Training and Professional Development in IT

- RPSGB will promote and facilitate training for members on general computer skills through appropriate agencies, in order to support professional practice.
- Continuing Professional Development will be an integral and mandatory aspect of pharmacy professional practice in future. RPSGB will support and facilitate the development of e-learning and web-based packages to support CPD, where appropriate.
- RPSGB will facilitate and support the development of training and professional development to ensure that all its members are equipped to use pharmacy IT applications as an integral part of their daily working lives, and are able to engage with and evaluate new developments.
- RPSGB will explore how informatics orientation and education can best be included in the undergraduate pharmacy curriculum and pre-registration experience. RPSGB will support pharmacists who are seeking to undertake an informatics or information science specialist course, in

order to specialise in clinical informatics, in line with other initiatives for supporting pharmacists with a special interest.

#### On the Use of Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions in Community Pharmacies

- RPSGB believes that the electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP) is a valuable contribution to patient care and provision of pharmaceutical services. For pharmacists, implementation of eTP has the potential to improve dispensary workflow, with a beneficial effect on the safety of the dispensing process, and the security of prescription information in the pharmacy. For the patient, eTP offers the prospect of being able to collect their medicines in a timely manner from a pharmacy of their choice.
- RPSGB is concerned that the eTP system used is fit for purpose and is committed to working with Connecting for Health to advise on design and implementation aspects of eTP. RPSGB has built a good working relationship with the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) team at Connecting for Health, and will continue to develop this relationship as the EPS is rolled out.
- RPSGB is committed to evidence-based development of technologies to improve pharmaceutical care, so that the benefits of the systems are validated. The RPSGB welcomes the benefits analysis work being conducted on the EPS by academic researchers and looks forward to the publication of results.
- The further development of safe and effective systems is facilitated when the systems are being actively used and when lessons are learnt from their implementation. RPSGB would encourage pharmacists, especially those in the EPS r2 early implementer areas, to work closely with suppliers in implementing EPS in their areas, in order to realise the potential benefits for patient care.

#### On Use of Care Records by Pharmacists

- RPSGB already has a policy position concerning the use of GP records by pharmacists. This should now be developed to take into account access to care records by pharmacists in pharmacy care settings. RPSGB is committed to supporting its members in the use of care records to support the development of pharmacy practice in pharmacy care settings.
- RPSGB believes that access to care records would have a beneficial effect on patient care, by reducing medication related critical incidents. In a recent observational study, 6.5% of admissions to the medical admissions

unit in a teaching hospital in Nottingham were judged to be drug related with 67% of these judged to be preventable<sup>1</sup>. Providing community pharmacists access to a patient's medication profile and information on current clinical conditions would improve the safety of prescribing, for example by checking that a patient was not allergic to an individual drug.

- Consumer research indicates that consumers want and expect continuity of care and for all healthcare professionals (including pharmacists) involved in their care to have access to their medical record. RPSGB should campaign for pharmacist access to care records when appropriate, in order to promote pharmacists as fully integrated members of the care team, to patients and fellow healthcare professional.
- RPSGB will liaise with representatives of medical professional bodies and patient groups to address issues associated with pharmacy access to care records and to promote the benefits of access to care records by pharmacists.
- Pharmacists' use of care records should support specific aspects of professional practice – for example, allergy history checking, or to check for previous adverse drug events associated with a specific prescribed medicine. Procedures should be in place for using care records for these purposes. RPSGB will look to develop guidance for pharmacists using care records in different settings.
- Pharmacists have a professional requirement to make the care of the patient their first concern, Principle 1 of the Code of Ethics ([www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/coeppt.pdf](http://www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/coeppt.pdf)). RPSGB will, where possible, contribute to the development of official and interdisciplinary standards for care records, and will engage in professional debates on consent and confidentiality.

#### On the Communication of Patient Data

- As they begin to deliver new professional services (for example, Vascular Risk Assessments), pharmacists will need to ensure that patient data is transmitted to and from other health professionals in a safe and secure manner. RPSGB recognises that there may be different types of technical solution to support this, but will uphold the use of appropriate security and encryption standards, and will facilitate evaluation of the available technologies, so that relevant information is available to pharmacists.

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<sup>1</sup> “Investigation into the reasons for preventable drug related admissions to a medical admissions unit: observational study”; *Qual Saf Health Care* 2003;12:280-285)

### On the Development of Comprehensive Electronic Prescribing to support Clinical Pharmacists in Hospital

- There is evidence to indicate that electronic prescribing systems in hospitals can reduce medication-related errors and improve workflow in hospitals. Hospital electronic prescribing systems also have the potential to support innovative ways of providing pharmacy services in hospitals. RPSGB welcomes the development of hospital electronic prescribing systems and their use by pharmacists and other healthcare professionals in hospitals.
- RPSGB is committed to evidence-based development of technologies to improve pharmaceutical care, so that the benefits of the systems are validated. RPSGB will encourage hospital pharmacists to take a lead in evaluating the benefits of hospital electronic prescribing systems and disseminating the results of these evaluations.
- RPSGB is concerned that hospital electronic prescribing systems are developed to support pharmacist-led services in all clinical specialties. Specialist pharmacists are uniquely placed to contribute to the design of functionality to support their clinical specialty. RPSGB has a role in coordinating and facilitating the involvement of pharmacists with special interests in software design and implementation in specialist areas.
- RPSGB will support the development and evaluation of IT initiatives to support and extend the work of consultant pharmacists.
- RPSGB will support the development of a national standard pharmaceutical care record for patients receiving care from pharmacists. This record will be integrated with medical care records, and the specialist care records for other professions. Such a care record will provide a standard for pharmacists working in hospitals, and will provide a platform for care transfer at the primary care/secondary care interface.

### On use of Proprietary Pharmacy Systems

- While national IT solutions are being developed in England, Scotland and Wales, RPSGB recognises that most practicing pharmacists access these solutions via established proprietary pharmacy systems. RPSGB recognises the expertise contributed by pharmacy system designers, and will support pharmacy systems suppliers in the development of appropriate functionality by issuing clear professional guidance, and encouraging pharmacists to discuss specific local requirements with their systems suppliers.

- Pharmacy systems provide a range of configuration options to support local variations in pharmacy practice. Pharmacists are encouraged to explore the configuration options available through their system, to ensure that their system is appropriately configured to support their current and future working practices.

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