

Top TIPS for **Accessing Medicines** for adults at the **End of Life** in the Community

Tips for **Health Care Professionals** using Community Pharmacies:

- Ensure that prescriptions are produced at the earliest possible opportunity, to allow sufficient time for supply/resolving complications
- Use the Dorset Formulary and prescribe generically, where appropriate
- Ensure prescriptions comply with all legal requirements
- Use the patient's regular pharmacy as the first point of call for End of Life medication
- Establish a timeframe for when the medication is needed and communicate this to the pharmacy, where possible.
- Leave a contact name and number for the pharmacy to use in case of stock issues/delays

**NOTE for Prescribers:** *If medicines are needed urgently (same day) consider issuing items on separate prescriptions, so that if all items cannot be fulfilled by one pharmacy, prescriptions can be dispensed by an alternative pharmacy. This will eliminate the need for the practice to re-issue prescriptions and minimise inconvenience to patients and their family. If the prescription does need to be re-issued, please have a plan in place at the practice to allow this to happen smoothly and in a timely manner to support both the community pharmacy team and the patient.*

### Tips for all **Community Pharmacies**:

- Establish the urgency of the prescription when handed in, if possible
- Promptly check whether you have the stock required to fulfil the prescription(s) and communicate this with the patient representative
- If the stock needs to be ordered, check whether the timeframe of supply is satisfactory and if the medication is in stock with suppliers
- If a drug is out of stock long term and unavailable at local pharmacies, help to arrange a prescription for an alternative drug with the prescriber
- If you don't have the stock and it is needed urgently, offer to call your nearest pharmacy on the Dorset Palliative Care Drug Service, to check if they have the stock available
- Have a list of the pharmacies providing the Dorset Palliative Care Drug Service available, so that contact details are easily accessible for use/signposting
- Check the prescription for clinical appropriateness (e.g. dosing) and legal requirements (e.g. quantities in words and figures) at the earliest possible opportunity, so that any amendments if needed can be made promptly
- Take a contact name and number for the patient/carer in case of unforeseen stock issues/delays

### Tips for pharmacies providing the **NHS Dorset commissioned Palliative Care Drug Service**:

- In addition to the points above, ensure that all pharmacy staff and locums are aware of the service and its requirements
- Carry out regular stock checks to maintain the required stock of listed palliative care drugs
- Carry out regular date checks on specified EoL medicines
- Submit claims regularly, including for reimbursement for out-of-date medicines
- If you don't have the stock and it is needed urgently, offer to call your nearest pharmacy on the Dorset Palliative Care Drug Service, to check if they have the stock available
- Take a contact name and number for the patient/carer in case of unforeseen stock issues/delays
- In addition to completing the usual notification pathways if the pharmacy is unable to open during its contracted hours, please contact the urgent care service Hub on 03000 369 0004 to inform them.

N.B. This document was developed by Dorset Palliative Care working group, in collaboration with Dorset LPC