**PRACTICE LETTERHEAD**

**Patient Communication - Rescue Packs**

We have been made aware of some inaccurate information circulating (especially on social media) regarding special ‘rescue packs’ of antibiotics and oral steroids for patients with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (or even for those who don’t have these conditions).

We would like to reassure you that patients who suffer with severe respiratory conditions already have these in place (along with the instructions how to use them). Oral steroids are powerful medicines and any decision to use them would need careful evaluation by a prescriber, usually a doctor or respiratory specialist nurse.

The current advice is please do not contact your GP practice for a rescue pack unless this is something that has been previously agreed and prescribed by your medical team. You should continue to manage your condition in the usual way and if you feel you have symptoms of COVID-19, go to <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> before doing anything else.

We are aware of increasing requests for inhalers from patients who haven’t had them for a significant period of time. There is a risk of supply problems if inhalers are issued to people who don’t currently need them. GP practices will need to review requests on an individual basis and will only prescribe where there is current clinical need for an inhaler. If your condition changes in future and your GP thinks you need an inhaler it will be prescribed for you at that point.

At the moment, inhaler prescriptions are also being limited to one of each type of inhaler in order to make sure that all patients who need one can get one.

You should continue to manage your conditions in the usual way and if you feel you have symptoms of COVID-19, go to <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> or call 111 (online services should be used as a first choice) before doing anything else.

**GP Practice Comms**

**Inhalers**

We are aware of increasing requests for inhalers from patients who haven’t had them for a significant period of time.  Each patient should be reviewed on an individual basis and certainly not all patients should have these prescribed as there should be a clinical need for this. Patients who haven’t had these for at least 18 months probably don’t need a prescription but may need them prescribing in future if they have a clinical need.  There is a risk to general supply of these for those who do need them if we significantly change the normally prescribing rate and we are already seeing many stock shortages with these.  In the meantime if you have patients who do require an inhaler then we would suggest limiting this to one inhaler where appropriate to help manage the supply chain.

**Rescue Packs**

We have also been made aware of some inaccurate information circulating (especially on social media) regarding rescue packs and intend to send out the following message to patients via CCG social media channels. Practices may wish to use the same messaging:

*“We have been made aware of some inaccurate information circulating (especially on social media) regarding special ‘rescue packs’ of antibiotics and oral steroids for patients with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (or even for those who don’t have these conditions).*

*We would like to reassure you that patients who suffer with severe respiratory conditions already have these in place (along with the instructions how to use them). Oral steroids are powerful medicines and any decision to use them would need careful evaluation by a prescriber, usually a doctor or respiratory specialist nurse.*

*Please do not contact your GP practice for a rescue pack unless this is something that has been previously agreed and prescribed by your medical team. You should continue to manage your condition in the usual way and if you feel you have symptoms of COVID-19, go to* [*https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19*](https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19) *or call 111 (online services should be used as a first choice) before doing anything else.”*

Please note that this is current advice (as of 23rd March) and guidance around use of rescue packs may change as things progress.