

IMPORTANT MESSAGE: FAX TO GP PRACTICES: CYLINDER OXYGEN

Some GP practices have received a fax message from suppliers stating that the supplier will be advising patients who need immediate supply of oxygen cylinders to contact their GP so that he can issue an FP10 prescription to a pharmacy contractor in order to meet the patient's requirements.

THIS MESSAGE CLARIFIES THE POSITION. PCTs ARE REQUESTED TO BRING THIS TO THE ATTENTION OF LOCAL GP PRACTICES AND PHARMACY CONTRACTORS PROVIDING A CYLINDER SERVICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

GPs are encouraged to use the new Home Oxygen Order Form (HOOF) from 1 February 2006 to support transition to the new oxygen service arrangements as soon as possible. The Department of Health also recognises that many pharmacy contractors have made plans to withdraw from provision of the cylinder service.

However, until NHS regulations are amended in Spring 2006, PCTs are advised that a GP may continue to use an FP10 to prescribe cylinder oxygen for a patient and a pharmacy contractor may continue to dispense such a prescription, for which he will receive re-imburement.

Where a pharmacy contractor dispenses an FP10 prescription for cylinder oxygen and provides a cylinder service for a patient, he will receive payment under the current arrangements until the patient transfers to a new supplier – as set out in Part X of the Drug Tariff (as amended at 1 February 2006).

These arrangements will help ensure that patients continue to receive oxygen supplies during the transition to the new service.

The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) has issued advice to pharmacy contractors. A pharmacy contractor may dispense the FP10 for cylinder oxygen. Where the pharmacy contractor no longer wishes to provide this service, he can pass this to a contractor who is continuing to provide a cylinder service, or he can refer the FP10 back to the prescriber.

If a pharmacy contractor is happy to continue to provide a cylinder service, cylinder gas suppliers will continue to fulfil cylinder orders as usual – see Part X of the Drug Tariff.

A GP can continue to use these arrangements with pharmacy contractors if he/she is concerned about possible delay in delivery of cylinder oxygen to a patient. These arrangements can also be used where a patient or carer inform the GP or practice staff that they are worried about timely delivery of cylinders.

Over the past few months, PCTs have been working with GPs to identify patients with high use of cylinder oxygen to arrange, as appropriate, for these patients to use the concentrator service. That work has supported the

successful transfer of thousands of patients, requiring continuous or long-term oxygen, to new suppliers before 1 February 2006. GPs are encouraged to continue to identify such patients as part of the managed transfer of existing patients to new suppliers.