

Selective Automation of the Pharmacy Payment Process for AMS

For prescriptions **dispensed from February 1st 2010** PSD will start to use electronic claim messages to automate the payment process for an agreed list of items. This process will apply to all Community Pharmacies and both the process and the medicines item list has been agreed with Community Pharmacy Scotland. PSD will start to process the electronic claims for these items from mid-March to meet the end of April 2010 payment date. This is in keeping with the normal processing and payment timetable.

The following explains the approach taken by PSD to ensure payments remain accurate and to highlight to pharmacists the growing importance of submitting correct AMS electronic claims.

Basis for automation

In order to price each prescription PSD need to identify “a priceable item”. Payment will only be automated where

- The ePay priceable Item = the PSD pricing staff's priceable item

The actual reimbursement for the item will be calculated in exactly the same way as currently happens.

ePay, the PSD process which checks the electronic claim, identifies the priceable item from the contents of the electronic claim message, uses the same business rules as PSD pricing staff and then decides whether the claimed dispensed item is a valid claim against the prescribed item.

For the agreed items there is sufficient existing data in PSD's payment system to demonstrate a direct match between pricing staff and ePay output for the same prescribed/dispensed combination. This ensures that there is no human inconsistency in interpreting the application of the pricing rules.

When this direct match does not happen the prescription will be presented to PSD pricing staff for manual intervention.

Prescriptions that meet the following conditions will be passed to pricing staff for processing regardless of the ePay output:

- Any prescription form where the PSD scanners are unable to correctly read the form information or barcode
- Any form other than a GP10
- Any GP10 prescription form where an electronic claim message cannot be found for the barcode
- Any GP10 prescription form or electronic claim which indicates that the patient has paid a patient charge
- Any claims that contain an electronic endorsement that ePay cannot currently process
- Any items in short supply

Pharmacists should also continue to supply required endorsements on paper and electronically as the paper endorsements will be used if the claim is passed to pricing staff and the electronic endorsements used if the claim is processed by ePay.

Items which will be Automated

PSD have reviewed the proven ePay prescribed/dispensed combinations with Community Pharmacy Scotland (CPS) and agreed an initial list of 80 medicines which this process will apply to.

PSD will automate the processing of electronically submitted claims for the prescribed/dispensed items on this list from all contractors subject to the other processing conditions previously mentioned.

Price Validation

PSD will continue to audit its pricing results, with additional focus on automated items. CPS will continue its price checking function on entire contractor batches of prescription pricing. CPS will be informed of which forms have been processed automatically, and if a discrepancy is found in any automated prescription PSD will work with CPS to understand the reason for any difference in price and correct any payment irregularities.

Evolution

It is anticipated that over time it will be possible to validate an increasing number of items in this way.

This approach has the advantage in that automation can be safely applied to a limited set of items for all CPs, making the payment process consistent. It is also believed that this will result in a controlled introduction of automation to the payment process.

As a result of automation, the volume of items presented to PSD pricing staff will be reduced. Both PSD and CPS recognise that the continuing increase in prescription volume has implications for the current pricing and payment timetable. To ensure contractors receive payment on time it is important that community pharmacy contractors engage with the process and continue to submit their claims electronically.

Keep Claiming

PSD and CPS believe the approach described above for the introduction of payment automation represents a safe and reliable method, building on the recorded results of the experienced pricing staff, and only allows automation of items where ePay is proven to produce the same result as a staff member.

We would like to encourage all Community Pharmacy contractors to continue submitting their claims electronically. PSD is currently receiving about 60% of all claims electronically. Significant numbers of Pharmacies are managing to achieve electronic claim levels of 80 to 90% of possible forms.

Information on the number of claims being paid automatically will be provided to contractors as this process is introduced.