

## United Kingdom

### Rational use of medicines in the in- and out-patient sector

#### Educational strategies:

- National guidance from Medicines and Prescribing Centre (MPC) at National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).
- Information on medicines, prescribing advice, training and education, governance and decision-making and practical tools for prescribers at [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk).
- National campaigns e.g. information for public and prescribers on appropriate use of antibiotics.
- Local strategies e.g. reducing medication waste through social marketing, patient evaluation and secondary care waste audits.

#### Managerial strategies:

- MPC's Key Therapeutic Topics (KTTs) aim to influence prescribers to prescribe in a more cost effective/clinically appropriate way.
- Nationally developed prescribing comparators allow local NHS organisations to compare prescribing rates with peers.
- Commercially developed prescription software prompts prescribers to prescribe generically e.g. script switch.
- Local formularies list medicines routinely funded on the NHS.

Strategies to  
improve use of  
medicines

#### Economic strategies:

- Prescribing incentive schemes reward GPs that meet prescribing budget targets and locally agreed quality criteria with nominal payments used to benefit patients.
- QIPP (Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention) Medicines Use and Procurement Workstream aims to generate additional cash releasing savings while continuing to improve quality. Its main focus is primary care prescribing, procurement in secondary care and medicines waste.

#### Regulatory strategies:

- Statutory restrictions on prescription of certain products (England). GPs and other prescribers may not prescribe some products and other products may only be prescribed to certain patients under certain circumstances.
- NICE technology appraisals (TA) on the use of specific new and existing drugs and treatments within the NHS. NHS legally obliged to fund treatments and drugs recommended by NICE within three months of publication of NICE TA.

#### Evaluation of the measures:

- QIPP medicines use and procurement has delivered estimated savings of £700 million in 2011/12 (NHS Chief Executive's annual report 2011/12).
- Linked to the KTT and prescribing comparators, changes in the prescribing of NSAIDs have led to an estimated 1,000 fewer premature or avoidable cardiac events in England each year.
- High rates of generic prescribing - proportion of prescriptions prescribed generically in England in 2011 was 83% (68.9% dispensed).