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Date: 19th August 2015

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Sent via email

Dear Colleague

Re: Special Patient Notes and Right Care Plans

I have been asked to remind you about the use of Special Patient Notes and, where available, Right Care Plans particularly in relation to patients with mental health conditions following a Regulation 28 report to prevent future deaths from the Coroner's Office.

At a recent inquest the Derbyshire Assistant Coroner heard that the Out of Hours service did not have access to any information relating to a patient with a serious mental health condition. In particular, there was no information regarding relapse triggers or a clear plan of action in the event of a significant relapse. Had this information been available to the Out of Hours service it would have meant that the clinicians involved would have been better placed to risk assess the patient and it is possible that a tragic death may have been avoided.

Following receipt of this report a review of information sharing with one Out Of Hours provider showed that of 444 new plans only 29 related solely to mental health conditions. The vast majority of plans were for complex medical conditions. This suggests that Special Patient Notes and Right Care Plans are less frequently completed for patients suffering from significant mental health problems and that this situation could be improved.

I recommend that practices review their Serious Mental Illness registers to ensure that appropriate patients are identified that should have information shared with Out of Hours providers. Clearly patients such as the one in this case who have clear relapse triggers or indicators that their condition is deteriorating putting them at risk of harm should have this information shared.

I understand that the Medical Interoperability Gateway has been introduced in parts of Nottinghamshire and will be rolled out to the rest of the county and also across Derbyshire. This allows access, with patient consent, to read coded information in the patient's medical record. This in time should improve record sharing.

I would be grateful if you would review your patients with serious mental health conditions to ensure appropriate information is available to Out of Hours services to allow them to effectively manage such patients.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. Taylor', written in a cursive style.

Deputy Medical Director