

Dear Members and Friends,

Winter is always a busy time for doctors and healthcare staff. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, we appreciate practices will be faced with further challenges this year. We hope that your patients will be patient with you and your team when faced with busy phone lines, restrictions on face-to-face consultations and implementation of public health and infection controls in your practice in the months ahead. We are working closely with our members as they tackle difficult encounters such as requests for facemask exemption letters, refusing to wear masks in the practice and patients being unwilling to comply with public health advice. As always, please feel free to contact Medisec with any COVID 19 related queries, or indeed any medico-legal queries.

### **Change in Underwriter**

Medisec's new relationship with MedPro means that from 25 November 2020 existing members will transition to an occurrence policy with MedPro as their underwriter, starting from their individual renewal dates. As we enter into the transitional phase of changing underwriters, it is particularly important that all members notify us, as soon as possible, of any changes to their personal details, as well as any material facts or matters that you are aware of that may lead to a complaint or claim against you.

Further information on the switch to occurrence cover is available [here](#)

We wish to remind members that they must notify Medisec of any potential complaint or claim. It is a condition of your policy of insurance that you immediately:-

- *Notify Medisec of any circumstances which might reasonably be expected to result in a claim, irrespective of the validity or otherwise of the claim. Such circumstances could range from an adverse patient incident or outcome, to a threat of litigation and of course service of proceedings.*
- *Medisec's Complaints and Disciplinary Assistance is conditional upon prompt notification to Medisec. Early notification to Medisec will trigger the benefits of your Membership by allowing us to provide timely assistance and protect your interests.*

### **Medzine content**

We include in this month's Medzine a summary of useful tips to help your practice become "winter-ready" and an article highlighting awareness of sepsis. We are often contacted by members who are notified of forged / altered paper prescriptions and we include a useful guide outlining steps to take when notified that a forged/ altered prescription in your name has been presented to a pharmacy.

We have included a reminder for our members on their responsibilities when prescribing Benzodiazepines, Z-drugs and Pregabalin.

Safe prescribing in general practice is so important and as part of our ongoing commitment to reducing risk, we are happy to announce new factsheets and confirm that a recording of our recent sponsored webinar by Dr Paul Ryan, GP and Pharmacist and ICGP Therapeutics Lead on "Safely Prescribing Medication in General Practice" is available to view [here](#)

The Medisec team was delighted to kick off our Autumn / Winter series of Practice Staff webinars on 20 October with a session on Confidentiality, Complaints Management and Immunisation. A recording of our webinar is available to view [here](#). We look forward to "seeing" you all tomorrow for our next webinar, details of which you can find below.

Don't forget we are available 24/7 to look after you and no issue is too small. We hope you look after yourselves and your loved ones this winter.

Best Wishes,

Ruth Shipsey & the Medisec team



## Members & Practice Staff Webinar

Our next webinar session for members and practice staff will be held tomorrow, Tuesday **10 November** from 1.00pm to 2.00pm, focusing on Consent & Children First Obligations, Medical Reports for Third Parties and Infection Control and Prevention in General Practice.

Click [Read More](#) below for details on how to register, if you haven't already done so.

Please also save the date for the final Practice Staff webinar of 2020, taking place on **Tuesday, 01 December**.

[Read More](#)

## Suspected forged/altered prescriptions

During a busy afternoon surgery, you are contacted by a local pharmacist who informs you that a patient has presented at the pharmacy with a suspected forged/altered prescription.

What should you do?

[Read More](#)



## Important reminder when prescribing benzodiazepines, z-drugs and pregabalin

Medisec members are reminded of the important guidance issued in September 2019 by the Medical Council to all doctors prescribing benzodiazepines, z-drugs and Pregabalin, reminding doctors to follow best practice guidelines and to only prescribe benzodiazepines or similar drugs when absolutely required.

Significant concerns have since arisen about a number of situations where sub-optimal or unacceptable prescribing patterns and management plans have been identified. We therefore wish to

reiterate, in the strongest possible terms, the importance of complying with this guidance.

[Read More](#)



## Safer prescribing/repeat prescribing

We are delighted to introduce our new factsheets and guidance documents on the following topics which we hope will be of assistance to you:-

- Safer prescribing, available [here](#)
- Steps to safer prescribing, available [here](#)
- Medication reviews for repeat prescribing, available [here](#)
- Repeat prescribing, available [here](#)

Should you have any specific queries or require further guidance, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

## Clinical Corner

### Beware Sepsis – Think Sepsis

The HSE *National Sepsis Report 2018*, available [here](#) describes the burden of sepsis on the Irish health system. While the report is comprehensive and detailed, much of the information gleaned is based on hospital-based diagnoses of Sepsis. They do, however, refer to the following facts from US figures:

*'The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that 80% of all sepsis cases arise in the community and therefore present to the emergency department. The majority of these cases, 76.7%, are managed on a general ward and these patients have the alarming mortality rate of 14%.'*

If similar figures are to be assumed for an Irish environment, sepsis is very much a Primary Care issue and GPs are reminded to remain on the alert for diagnosing Sepsis in a patient.

[Read More](#)

### Is your practice winter ready?

Healthcare undergoes large seasonal fluctuations, peaking in the winter in particular with a generalised increase in respiratory infection, including influenza. This in 'normal' times has the potential to cause additional workload and stress to general practitioners and their staff. Coupled now with the additional burden and uncertainty posed by the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, winter months will no doubt be even more challenging for general practice.

Medisec understands how difficult this period is for members so in this article aims to provide some practical tips and a checklist to assist your practice become more resilient for those winter months ahead.

[Read More](#)

## Get in touch

Due to Covid 19, our offices are currently closed; please visit our [website](#) for all our contact details and

do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries.

For general queries please telephone **1800 460 400** or **01 6610504**

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RT [@drbosheaGP](#): It may be a bit of a cliché...but...(yes, you've guessed it...) ...the fate of our discipline is in great hands ! [#BEaGP](#) [@rosabl...](#)

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