More drugs expected on nursing formulary

By Nick Lipley

THE GOVERNMENT is expected to take on board advice presented next month to expand the nurse formulary. The recommendations are due to be published in the second review team report headed by June Crown.

Dr Crown told Nursing Standard: ‘We are anticipating an extension to prescribing rights. We hope it will be co-ordinated across the four countries.’

However, she stressed that recommendations in the report have to be approved by ministers.

She warned the move would require alterations in legislation, as well as additional training and administrative changes: ‘These things take time, even with a fair wind behind them.’

Her review team’s first report gave official backing to nurses using group protocols to administer and supply drugs.

On top of advocating greater prescribing powers for nurses, the second report is also likely to tackle the issue of extending nurse prescribing to staff in acute hospitals.

Meanwhile, the RCN has renewed calls for an extension to the scheme in the light of new government figures showing the success of the scheme.

San Galbraith, Scottish health minister, announced that the number of nurse prescribers in Scotland has now reached 550.

June Andrews, RCN Scottish secretary, said: ‘Apart from initial training in pharmacology, this could save resources while improving patient care.’

The DoH has yet to publish its evaluation of the prescribing pilot sites.

However, Mark Jones, RCN primary care adviser, said there was little need for further evaluation: ‘Nurse prescribing is working. If the NHS Executive had any qualms about it, they would have undertaken an extensive evaluation.’

Nurse pays £125 after her car was towed

A COMMUNITY psychiatric nurse whose car was towed away while she was on duty was forced to pay £125 out of her own pocket to get her car back.

Yvonne Louis’s car was towed away after she went to collect a patient’s prescription. She parked outside a GP surgery in Willesden, north London, in a residents’ bay for just a few minutes.

The London Borough of Brent refused to waive the fine because she did not have a ‘health emergency’ badge. However, Ms Louis had applied for a badge in February.

The parking badge system replaced BMA car stickers in London last year. Parking attendants allow nurses to park in certain areas when on urgent visits.

Tim Golbourne, director of finance at the trust, said compensation claims would be considered individually, but he expected staff to comply with local parking conditions.

A spokesperson for the London Borough of Brent said nurses displayed the correct badge, they would not be towed away.

Nicola Oldmeadow (above) is facing jail after she admitted posing as a qualified nurse to spend more than three years working in hospitals and nursing homes. Appearing at Gloucester Crown Court last week, she admitted six deception charges. She was released on bail on condition she does not attempt to find work as a nurse, but warned she could face prison.

Midwives have supported health secretary Frank Dobson, who said the closure of small maternity units was a ‘dubious change’ on Radio 4's Today programme. The Royal College of Midwives has been campaigning for a halt to the closure of small maternity units.

IN BRIEF

■ A shake-up of NHS quality and accreditation bodies is to be announced this week by health minister Baroness Jay. The King’s Fund Organisational Audit, Health Services Accreditation and the Hospital Accreditation Programme are to be amalgamated, to form the Health Quality Service (HQS).

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