Health and Welfare webinar Q&A transcript

Learning about Bullen Healthcare's EB prescription service

with Denise and Lesley from Bullen.

Q. If no one's in for the delivery, do they re-deliver, rather than leaving the medical supplies outside the house?

A. We can ask the delivery company to leave in a safe place or with a specified neighbour, or if they wanted, get it to an alternative delivery address.

If there are no delivery instructions, and there's nowhere safe to leave, they will automatically be delivered the next day, or attempt delivery the next day.

We can change the delivery address, if you're going to visit a friend, relative, or on holiday. Some of our customers, who maybe are at university, stay at home as well, so we make sure they've got product at both addresses.

Q. My daughter was diagnosed at six months old. It was a whole new world to us. What we find very difficult, and I think we have this every single month, is the GPs not providing a prescription. She's five years old now and her requirements change every month. What can you suggest?

A. We have this across the board, not just with our EB members, but also every single patient that we deal with, the whole 50,000. We have some surgeries that are amazing and give us what we want and where we want, and some, where we have to fight.

Maybe if one of the EB nurses could write a letter to the GP explaining about the condition, explaining what they need, why they need it, and the amount, and also explain that it could change monthly; it's not a set monthly amount.

The DEBRA EB Community Support Team can also provide a letter for a GP, explaining EB that can help with getting prescriptions.

Q. Some GP surgeries have an app and I think most GP surgeries will eventually go to that, but at the minute, some surgeries don't have that option. How do you suggest getting in contact to change prescription quantities?

A. If there is no app, Bullen will email the GP on your behalf, to change quantity because it's not a set amount every month.

The surgeries physically go onto the system and change the quantities manually to send you the prescriptions. So, if they don't do that, it's whatever is on the repeat, and it might be more or less than what you're asking for, and that's where all our problems are coming from.

Q. Do you have your own warehouse of stock, especially for products that people with EB use? Or is it the same as other chemists that use two different supply warehouses?

A. We have a big warehouse, and at the bottom of the warehouse, that is all taken up by the DEBRA members with EB, so yes, we have all our own stock on site. We don't just stock one or two boxes of each dressing, we stock hundreds and hundreds of boxes of each dressing. It's very rare we'll run out of stock. We have key partnerships with all the manufacturers because we manage so many people with EB.

We are specialist providers. We're also willing to split boxes, so we can give you exactly the quantities that you need.

Q. I guess Bullen are in that prime position for if and when something new comes out that benefits people living with EB, then you're there to get the supplies that you might need?

A. Yes, we have worked with the NHS in the past to put product on prescription and stock it if a manufacturer has asked us to look at, and the EB nurse has looked at it and said this would be great for our patients.

That's part of our partnership with DEBRA, because obviously you're all coming up with new treatments all the time, and so we have meetings with the manufacturers, and we try to look at the best way of getting a supply route to the patient.

Q. Is there a charge for the prescription or the delivery? How does the charging work?

A. No, there is no charge, no charge at all. All deliveries are free. Most people are normally exempt from paying for prescriptions anyway, so no charge whatsoever.

Q. If I need different amounts of dressings that are on my prescription because of how things change, how does that work?

A. You would just let us know what they need and how many you need. I would then contact the doctor and explain why we're asking for more. And then we would have to get that prescription from the GP. It's that personalisation, so people can get exactly what they need.

Lesley plans to ring people on certain days and do the stock check. For some people emails may work better and can sent at any time. The next morning, the emails get actioned and confirmation is emailed back.