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From: DIAGNOSTICSTEAM, Se (NHS ENGLAND - X24) <se.diagnosticsteam@nhs.net>
Sent: 11 January 2024 10:49
Subject: Event Invitation: Enhancing GP direct access to diagnostic tests for patients with suspected chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, or heart failure

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Dear Pathology networks, Physiological Science Communities of Practice, Imaging Networks and ICB diagnostic leads,

Please see below email from the GP direct access team regarding the Event invitation 'Guidance to enhance GP direct access to diagnostic tests for patients with suspected COPD, asthma, or heart failure' on **23.01.24**.

Registration details below- please circulate as appropriate.

Many thanks

Dermot

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From: GPDIRECTACCESS (NHS ENGLAND - X24) <england.gpdirectaccess@nhs.net>
Subject: Event Invitation: Enhancing GP direct access to diagnostic tests for patients with suspected chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, or heart failure

Dear Regional Diagnostics Leads,

Following yesterday's cascade to systems to announce the GP direct access guidance for patients with suspected COPD and heart failure, please could you share the below invitation to your networks for the virtual GPDA II implementation event, due to take place on Tuesday 23rd January, 10.30am-12.15pm.

The agenda is being finalised and will be shared in early January but we have a registration link below for colleagues to register to attend now.

Dear colleague,

Event invitation: Guidance to enhance GP direct access to diagnostic tests for patients with suspected COPD, asthma, or heart failure.

Achieving equity of patient access to diagnostics: experiences from the frontline.

[Register here](#)

Date: 23 January 2024, Time: 10.30am-12.15pm (via MS Teams)

This week, NHS England published [new guidance](#) aimed at enhancing access to diagnostics for patients with suspected chronic respiratory conditions and heart failure.

This event will give you access to patients and frontline clinical experts, so you can explore the improvements to patient outcomes that this new guidance makes possible, as well as the benefits it enables across a breadth of NHS settings – from reduced UEC attendances and fewer inpatient admissions.

You will also have access to the experiences of commissioners that have restored diagnostic services for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma and supported the triage of suspected heart failure patients, so that higher risk patients get faster access to the diagnostics they need.

The event will be chaired by Dr Rhydian Phillips, Director of Diagnostics and System Improvement, and includes presenters from:

- Patient representatives from Asthma + Lung UK and Pumping Marvellous
- NHS England National Clinical Directors and National Speciality Advisors
- General Practice
- Commissioners

It is an opportunity to share learning and address challenges.

It will help to increase diagnoses of COPD and asthma at a time when there are an estimated 107,000 fewer new cases of asthma and 87,000 fewer cases of COPD (figures from March 2020 and December 2021).

It will help you to stop diagnoses of heart failure through hospital admission continuing to dominate.

I very much hope you will be able to join.

Many thanks in advance.

Kind regards,
Monica

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Subject: FOR CASCADE: Enhancing GP direct access to diagnostic tests for patients with suspected chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, or heart failure

Dear Colleagues,

NHS England is launching [new guidance](#) that aims to enhance GP direct access to diagnostic tests for patients with clinical features of suspected chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma or heart failure.

This will enable us to:

- achieve the earlier detection and diagnosis of COPD and asthma, enabling early interventions for optimal treatment, better management of the conditions and benefits to the health system. Earlier detection can also lead to a reduction in acute admissions, reduction in non-elective winter admissions, resource utilisation, improvement in quality of life and healthy life expectancy.
- achieve the earlier detection and diagnosis of heart failure, enabling referral for specialist assessment and echo in non-acute symptomatic patients, more effective use of echocardiography (echo) capacity and providing faster access to echo tests for acute heart failure patients.

The guidance sets out how to enhance GP direct access to diagnostic tests for patients with clinical features of suspected chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma or heart failure – giving us another opportunity to mitigate winter pressures through the earlier diagnosis of these conditions.

The tests are:

- spirometry for the diagnosis of COPD with fractional exhaled nitric oxide (FeNO) for suspected asthma
- N-terminal pro B-type natriuretic peptide (NT-proBNP) for patients with suspected heart failure

ICBs have a critical role to play in ensuring the new guidance is implemented effectively, and while I recognise that budgets are challenged, I encourage you to use these resources to restore local quality-assured spirometry and FeNO services. The result will be improved patient outcomes and wider NHS efficiencies.

Equally important, given the often-long waits patients can experience for echo, is to ensure that general practice operates in line with NICE Guidelines and uses NT-proBNP blood tests as a triage.

NHS Pathology Networks are equipped to provide this blood test and we encourage you to use resources to ensure that results are provided within 48 hours. This will ensure that echo can be available to higher-risk heart failure patients as quickly as possible.

Should you require more information or would like support to implement this guidance, please [visit the GP Direct Access II FutureNHS](#) page or contact england.gpdirectaccess@nhs.net.

Your work to implement this guidance is really appreciated.

Claire & Stella

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//ENDS//

Kind Regards,

James Turner (He/Him)

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