**Briefing: Updates to the Cheshire & Merseyside (C&M) Community Blood Pressure (BP) Testing Guidelines and Z cards, May 2019.**

**Purpose of the briefing**

To highlight main changes to the C&M community blood pressure (BP) testing Guidelines and z card.

**Background**

Tackling high BP is one of the C&M Health and Care Partnership (HCP) Prevention priorities. A range of community partners across C&M are supporting British Heart Foundation-funded pilots to increase high BP detection in pre-general practice community settings. Partners include Healthy Living Pharmacies, Fire and Rescue Services, Health Trainers, a mobile BP kiosk, and local workplaces.

Since the pilots commenced (around 18 months ago), nearly 10,000 ‘new case’ BP checks have been undertaken by community partners across C&M, but there is more work to be done! To achieve the national ambition of 80% high BP detection, C&M partners need to identify more than 130,000 additional high BP patients. This is a challenging ambition over the next decade and the ‘whole system’ approach underpinned by the local guidelines will be vital.

**Updates to local resources**

To support an optimal standardised pathway for BP testing by non-clinical community partners, local resources have recently been updated in consultation with local clinicians. Many thanks to those who gave feedback during the consultation period. The resources are:

* **Guidelines:** The Cheshire and Merseyside Guideline for Blood Pressure Testing in the Community (outside of General practice)
* **Z card:** The public facing folding leaflet that mirrors advice in the guidelines
1. **Updates to the Guidelines**

**1a. Scope: Inclusion of advice for known BP patients**

* The guideline was originally developed to support BP case-finding in the community. A broader need was identified for a resource to support known BP patients who don’t ‘know their numbers’. To address this, the scope of guideline was broadened to include basic, safe advice and signposting for known high BP patients.
* BHF pilots inclusion criteria have not changed, however, and only new-case BP checks are included in the pilot.
* Clinical management of high BP is tailored to meet patients’ unique circumstances. The guideline acts as a general guide only and does not replace advice of the patient’s clinician in known BP patients.

**1b. Improvements to the patient pathway where further review is advised**

* **High readings:** Advice for when a ‘high’ range BP reading is found has not changed, but more emphasis is being given in training to ensure members of the public are encouraged to return to community settings such as community pharmacies for a repeat BP check before being advised to see their own practice. The link to the pharmacy locator tool on the Happy Hearts website is included to help identify local pharmacies offering free BP checks.
* **Very high readings:** Advice for when a ‘very high’ range BP reading is found now includes a recommended 3rd check after 30 minutes rest if possible. It is recognised that in some circumstances a third reading will not be practical and as such this is left optional.
* **Irregular pulse**: If an incidental new finding of an irregular pulse (symptom-free) is identified, the time frame for medical review remains ‘within 48 hours’ but now includes ‘or by Monday if seen on a Friday’.

**1c. Clarifying responsibilities**

* The updated guideline clarifies that responsibility for following the guideline lies with the individual +/or organisation taking the blood pressure measurement. The member of the public who receives a BP check is responsible for acting on advice given.

**1d. Design**

* **‘Happy Hearts’ branding:** Both the Guidelines and the z card are now branded Happy Hearts, and contain a QR code that directs to the Happy Hearts website
* To accommodate additional content, the guideline is now in portrait orientation flowchart
* Traffic light colours allow more intuitive interpretation of guidelines
1. **Updates to the Z card**

Z card amendments reflect both changes made in the guideline based on clinical feedback and feedback from lay and patient groups. Many thanks to those who provided feedback.

**2a. Design**

* Amended to mirror changes in guideline, including additional content in relation to known BP patients in vertical flow chart format.
* Includes QR code to Happy Hearts website (and website address)

**2b. Advice**

* Advice on eating less saturated fat ‘to keep you heart happy’ now included

**2c. Blood pressure record section**

* Now includes time as well as date
* Column for recording ‘action’ number removed

**Frequently Asked Questions**

***Q Should BHF pilot sites now take BPs for known BP patients?***

**A** No – the pilot inclusion criteria hasn’t changed, the pilots are about case-finding only. Just use the left hand part of the flow chart entitled ‘no history of high blood pressure’.

***Q So who will use the guidance for known high BP patients?***

**A** It will be used in community pharmacies taking part in a new initiative whereby BP tests may be linked to CVD Medicines Use Reviews. It may also be useful at community BP testing events outside of the BHF pilots where a mixture of individuals both with and without a history of high BP may present for a BP test.

***Q Does the guideline replace NICE guidelines?***

**A** No! The guideline aligns to NICE guidelines and does not try to replace them. It provides a framework of reference for the steps before someone attends general practice.

***Q How can I find community pharmacies that will take BPs free of charge?***

**A** The guideline includes a link to the Pharmacy Locator Tool on the Happy Hearts website

***Q Where can I signpost members of the public for more information about high BP?***

**A** The guideline and z card contain a QR code that links to the Happy Hearts website. Other useful websites and a phone number are also provided for more information and advice.

***Q (Fire and Rescue Services only) Where can I find the numbers for recording actions in the contact assessment form?***

**A** On the updated z card the numbers that used to be in the ‘what next’ table are now in the bottom right corner of the flow chart boxes

***Q Who contributed to and signed off the guideline updates?***

**A** A large number of C&M primary care clinicians and staff provided feedback during the consultation. The updated guideline has been ratified by the multidisciplinary BHF pilot Steering Group, the C&M BP Board, and the C&M Health and Care Partnership Prevention Board.

***Q How can I get hold of the guidelines and z cards?***

***A*** Electronic versions of the guideline: Happy Hearts website; [www.happy-hearts.co.uk](http://www.happy-hearts.co.uk) (professionals tab). For hard copies email champscommunications@wirral.gov.uk