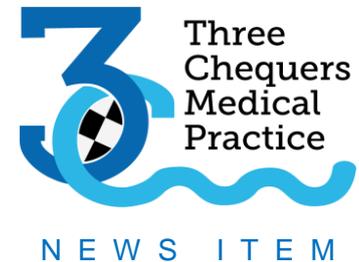




THE IMPLICATIONS OF USING ONLINE DISPENSARY SERVICES



PROTECT YOUR LOCAL SURGERY & DISPENSARY

Last month most of you, like me, will have received a letter in the post from a company called Pharmacy2U.

Let me say first of all that this is undoubtedly a reputable business and they have a perfect right to advertise their services in this way. The idea of a company offering to deal with your prescriptions and post your medicines to you at home, avoiding the need to go to the surgery does, on the face of it sound attractive.

Some of you may be tempted by this offer particularly with the recent teething troubles with our surgery's re-jig of the dispensing arrangements. However there are wider implications to signing up to this deal, which may well put our surgery at risk of closure.

General practice finance is somewhat complex, but one aspect is that in rural areas, doctors' surgeries may undertake to dispense medicines to patients who live more than a mile from the nearest chemist. The practice is paid for dispensing each prescription, just as chemists are. This is a valuable service to communities like ours, as is the presence of a branch surgery in the village, but is expensive of course, and the income from dispensing supports this provision quite significantly.

When patients of the more rural areas of the practice sign up to have their medicines dispensed by Pharmacy2U or any similar company, the practice will lose part of their dispensing income. The more of us who sign up, the greater the loss of dispensing income to the practice, and this threatens the viability of our surgery.

If the practice were no longer able to afford to provide a surgery in Winterslow, the health and wellbeing of all of us would be affected, but particularly the most vulnerable members of our community.

May I please ask you all to give careful thought to the wider implications before deciding whether or not to sign up with Pharmacy2U?

Thank you.

From a concerned patient and the **Three Chequers Medical Practice** team