

**April 2011**

NHS North East Essex Medicines Management team is committed to tackling the issue of waste medicines in a structured and integrated way that involves Patients and Carers. Sometimes patients receive medicines they don't actually use, or use only occasionally. Audits have shown that around half of all the medication returned to pharmacies or GP Practices had not even been opened. This means that patients are ordering and receiving medication that they don't even start to use.

The Department of Health estimates that as many as 1 in 9 households have at least one prescribed medicine no longer being used. Approximately £5 million is wasted every year in our locality on unused or partially used medication. This is money which could be reinvested into more front line care and services for the benefit of all.

For medication advice on medicines Pharmacy based services such as Medicines Use Reviews (MUR) are available free to all patients.

A medicines use review is an appointment with a pharmacist to focus on how you are getting on with your medicines. It usually takes place in your local pharmacy. It is a FREE NHS service. The meeting will:-



Help you to find out more about the medicines you are taking



Pick up any problems you are having with your medicines



Improve the effectiveness of your medicines



There may be easier ways to take them, or you may find you need fewer medicines than before



Get better value for the NHS – making sure that your medicines are right for you preventing unnecessary waste.

Please remember if you are on repeat medication, check to see what you will actually need and **ONLY ORDER WHAT YOU WILL USE IN A MONTH.**

If you would like more information on how to reduce your medicines waste please contact your local pharmacy, GP surgery or NHS North East Essex Medicines Management [marianne.gosling@nhs.net](mailto:marianne.gosling@nhs.net).