

**For more information**

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The new *home*  
**oxygen**  
*service*

*A quick guide*  
for health professionals



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From February 1, 2006 the home oxygen service in England and Wales is changing – for the better.

Air Products has been chosen as the oxygen supplier to your region. More detailed information will follow on the changes and our service, but this leaflet gives you a brief overview of the changes and how they affect patients.

#### How is the service changing?

A dedicated supplier has been appointed to provide a fully integrated service in each of the 10 regions in England as well as for Wales.

#### How does this differ from now?

At the moment a supplier provides concentrator services and local pharmacies generally supply cylinders to patients in their homes. Liquid oxygen is currently not widely available. From February 2006 a single supplier will provide all modalities.

#### Why are the changes being made?

To give patients more appropriate treatment by improving assessment and monitoring - following the recent NICE guidelines. The integrated service will also give better access to a wider range of equipment for their needs to improve their quality of life, increase choice, and create a more cost effective service.

#### When are the changes happening?

February 1 2006.

#### How will the service change?

Prescriptions or FP10s will be replaced by a new 'Home Oxygen Order'. These orders will state the need (short burst, long-term, ambulatory or lightweight), the flowrate and the hours of use each day. They will not specify the equipment to be supplied. Unlike prescriptions these orders will be

'evergreen' and so will not need to be repeated unless the patients' clinical or ambulatory needs change. GPs will order oxygen for patients with short-term and short burst oxygen needs or for relief in palliative care. Patients with long-term needs will then be assessed by respiratory consultants and their specialist teams.

Ambulatory oxygen will normally be prescribed following assessment by a specialist team, although a GP can prescribe this while the patient is awaiting assessment. As the regional supplier we will decide the best way, in terms of equipment, of supplying oxygen to meet patients' needs. We are also committed to bringing the benefits of new technology to patients as soon as possible.

#### How will the transition be managed?

After February 1 when oxygen is ordered for new patients and existing cylinder patients they will come under the new system. Each PCT/LHB has appointed oxygen leads to coordinate the transition.

#### What role will the PCTs/LHBs play?

PCTs/LHBs will be responsible for providing clinicians and patients with knowledge about these service improvements and changes. To help we are producing Q&As for clinicians and patients – call **0800 373580** for more information.

#### What areas does Air Products supply?

Under the new service we will supply the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, the West Midlands, East Midlands, South West England, North London and Wales.

#### Where do I get more information?

More information will be provided by the Department of Health in the run up to the start date. Suppliers will also be providing more information. For example Air Products is staging a series of presentations up until February. If you have any questions in the meantime you can call us on **0800 373580**.