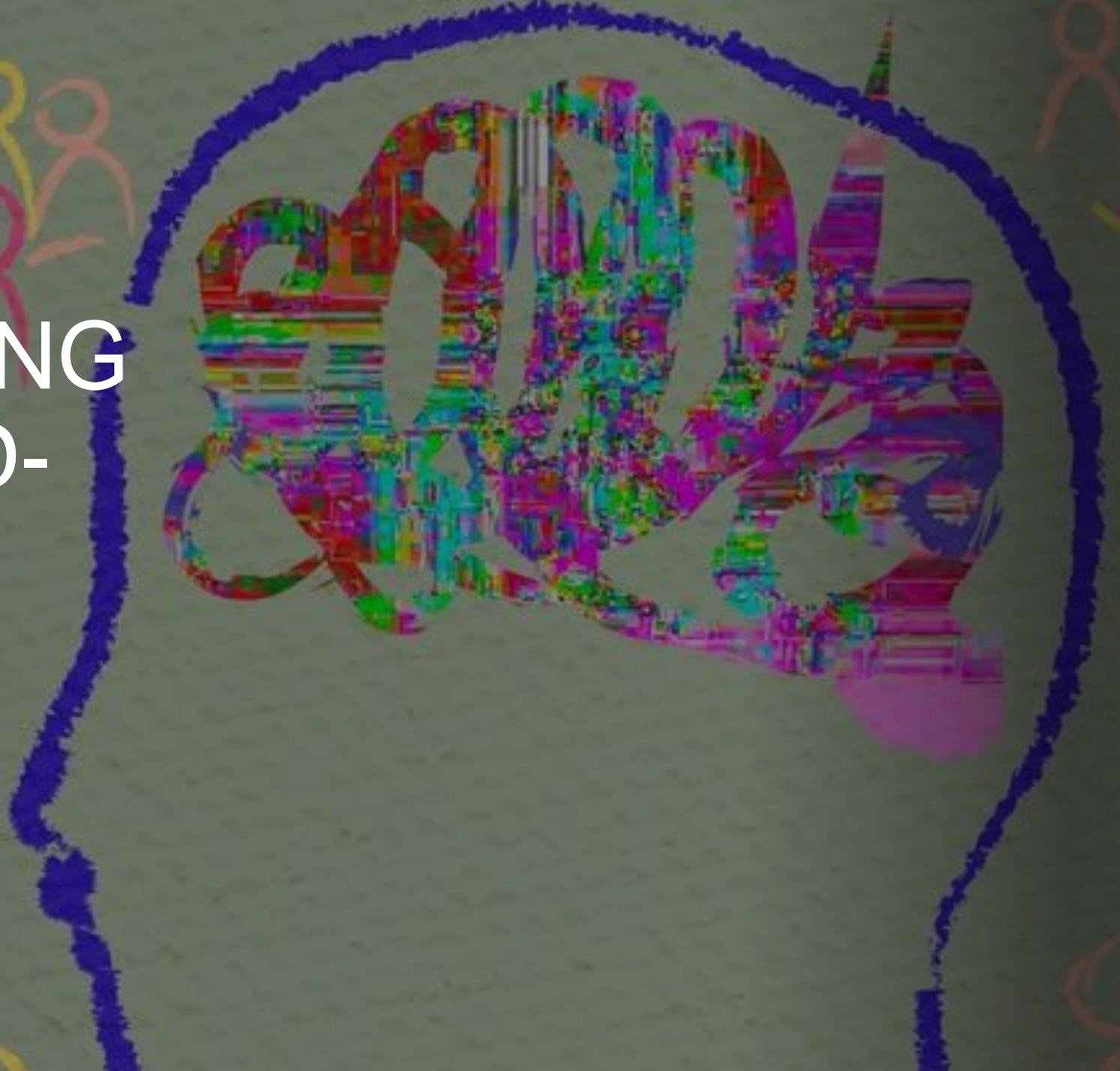


# CLOZAPINE PRESCRIBING AND DISPENSING DURING COVID- 19 PANDEMIC

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# Aims & Initiatives

- Maintain the robustness of the clozapine out-patient dispensing service during the COVID pandemic and establish a safeguard against potential staff shortages
- 'COVID-19 Emergency Provisions' enacted in April 2020 facilitated patients' continued access to ongoing treatment and aimed to reduce the additional burden on prescribers and pharmacists arising from the pandemic through:
  - Introduction of the 'national electronic prescription transfer system'
  - Change in repeat supply provisions

2 main initiatives to improve our clozapine service were identified as a result of these legislative changes:

1. All clozapine prescriptions to be sent by email to Healthmail
2. Fortnightly and four weekly clozapine prescriptions to be written with repeats up to 6 months



# Methods



1. Contacted clozapine prescribers across our 3 out-patients service areas to request repeats up to 6 months on all fortnightly and four weekly clozapine prescriptions
2. Phoenix Pharmacy Healthmail email address was set up
3. Memo sent to all community mental health clinics/service areas to outline the changes in the service
4. Delivery day for one of the service areas was brought forward by 24 hours to facilitate community mental health nurses' delivery of clozapine to cocooned patients
5. New endorsing template designed for endorsing of each dispensing on the reverse of the printed valid prescription from Healthmail



# Example of endorsing template

Pharmacy stamp

PHOENIX PHARMACY DEPARTMENT  
 60 ST MARY'S HOSPITAL  
 PHOENIX PARK, DUBLIN 20  
 TEL: 01 6250323 FAX: 01 6250422  
 SIGNATURE: R/SMD  
 DATE: 2/9/20/8/9/2020

20mg x 56 100mg x 84  
 Dispensed: 2/11/20  
 Date Disp: 2/11/20  
 Checked: SMD  
 Date checked: 8/9/2020  
 FBC: S 4152 2/9/20 ✓ SMD

No. of dispensing	Dispensed	Dispensed	Checked	FBC result
		Date	Date	
2	4152 25mg x 56 100mg x 84	2/10/20 R	06/10/2020 SMD	S 4152 6/10/20 ✓ SMD
3	4152 25mg x 56 100mg x 84	R 20/10/20	SMD 3/11/2020	S 4152 3/11/20 ✓ SMD

Clozapine-specific endorsing stamp

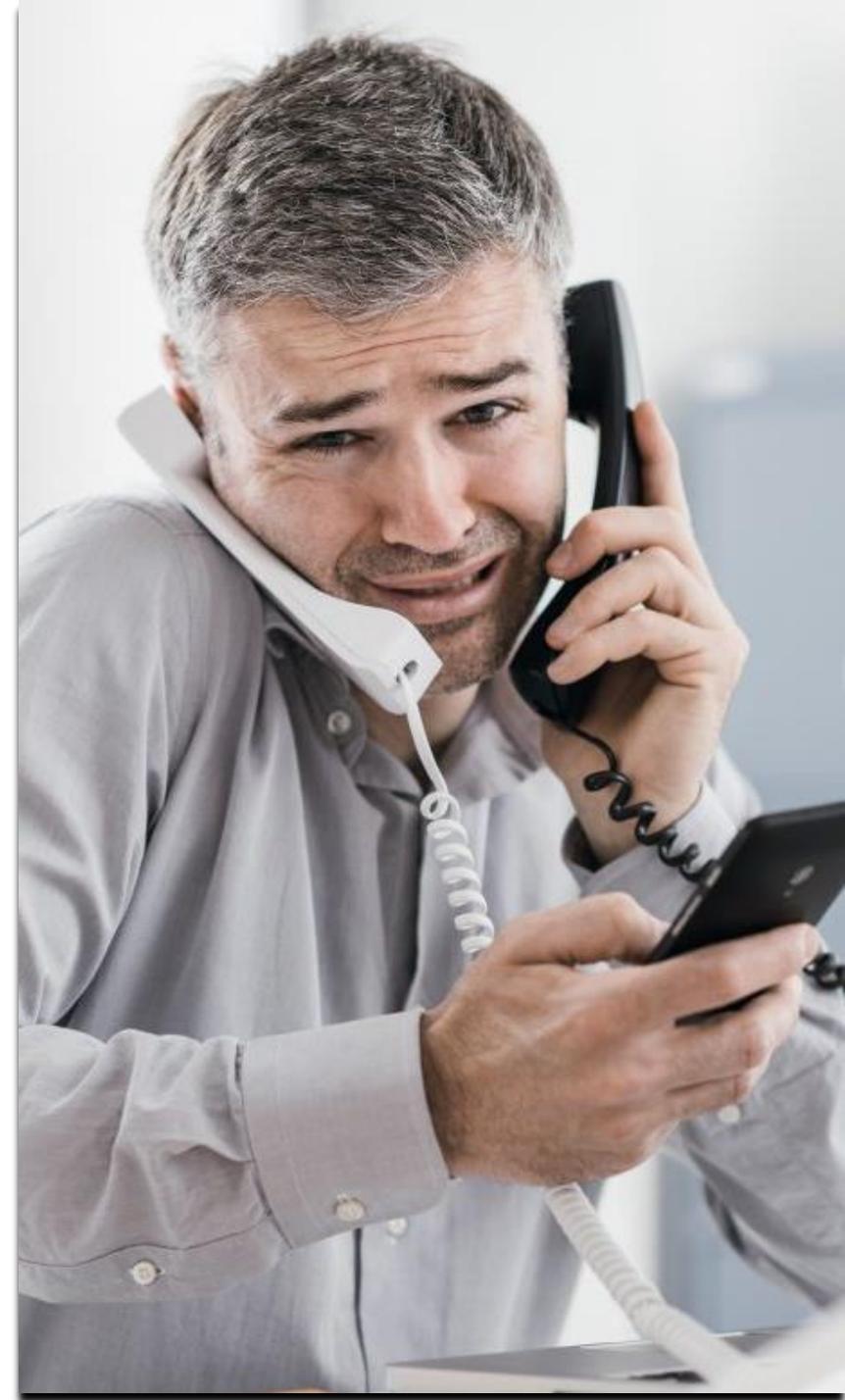
Endorsing of first dispensing

Endorsing of subsequent dispensings (up to a maximum of 6 months)

# Outcomes



- *Benefits for patients:*
  - Continuity of supply maintained
  - Contingency planning ensured all patients received their clozapine as scheduled
  - Prioritized the most at-risk group i.e. weekly patients
- *Benefits for pharmacy staff:*
  - Reduced number of phone calls
  - Streamlined process - Healthmail provides a real prescription in real time
  - Time saved facilitated virtual attendance at weekly MDT meeting
- *Benefits for medical staff:*
  - Reduced administrative burden
  - Secure email transmission from the prescriber's own HSE email via Healthmail
- *Benefits for nursing staff:*
  - Time saving from retrieving and posting prescriptions
  - Earlier clozapine supply facilitated prompt delivery to vulnerable service users



# Conclusions



- Maintained the robustness of our clozapine dispensing service during the pandemic and further streamlined and improved the service
- Overall administrative burden reduced for nursing, medical and pharmacy staff
- Time saved enables community mental health teams to focus on patient care and wellbeing in a highly vulnerable population
- Similar initiatives could be applied to other out-patient pharmacy dispensing services in Ireland
- A highly successful service improvement with benefits for staff and patients which we plan to maintain indefinitely

