

Access to Patient Records

A new secure website allowing patients to access and update their own health records online has been launched in Ayrshire and Arran.

The online Patient Portal is to be trialled in two GP practices – Townhead Surgery in Irvine and the Kilwinning Medical Practice – over the next six months. It allows patients to take more control of their own health by accessing and updating their records from anywhere with an internet connection.

The portal means registered patients can now log in from the privacy and comfort of their own home – or anywhere else with an internet connection – to undertake a number of tasks:-

Request appointments online

Request repeat prescriptions

Access test results

Record, track and monitor their blood pressure

Set targets for weight and other goals

Record and track blood sugar levels.

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon saw a demonstration of the portal this morning at Irvine's Townhead Surgery, where she met with practice staff and patients who have been involved in developing the £175,000 pilot. Ms Sturgeon said:

"The new Patient Portal being piloted in Irvine and Kilwinning not only lets patients see their own health information online, it allows them to make appointments, get prescriptions and input their blood pressure without having to make frequent surgery visits.

"It will make life a great deal easier for patients, as well as supporting the delivery of the highest-possible quality of primary care.

"One of our most important priorities is to make patients

partners in their own care, and this is exactly what the Patient Portal does. This is of course a pilot project, but NHS Ayrshire and Arran's efforts may pave the way for the rest of Scotland.

"We want to use technology wherever we can to make our healthcare more efficient and more secure – what's known as eHealth. By building on the systems we already have, we also make the best use of taxpayers' money."

GP Dr Jim Campbell from the Townhead Surgery is eHealth Clinical Lead for NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

He said:

"The development of the online patient portal has given us a wonderful opportunity to work closely with groups of patients to identify how they can take more control of their health.

"The system is secure and confidential, and we are convinced that following this pilot our patients will welcome the option to order repeat prescriptions, set targets, track their blood sugar levels and monitor their blood pressure.

"We are very grateful to these patients and to all the technical staff, both in NHS Ayrshire & Arran and at Microsoft, who have contributed to this pilot."

The portal builds on the success of a much smaller electronic access project run by the Townhead Surgery since 2002, which has seen more than 26,000 repeat prescriptions ordered by patients and, in just the first three months of this year, almost 1500 patient log-ons.

So we now wait to see if this pilot will be rolled out to the rest of Scotland over the coming months.