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Date

Dear MP

I am writing to you to express my concerns about a national supply shortage of certain medications that are having a substantial effect on pharmacies within this area.

Within the current system, when there are shortages in the supply chain, sometimes only expensive products are available, such as a brand that still matches the description on the prescription. However, usual NHS reimbursement processes mean the dispensing contractor would be providing the item at a loss, which may be manageable on occasion but not sustainable for any business. In such circumstances, the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) can appeal to the Department of Health (DH) to apply the 'no cheaper stock obtainable' (NCSO) concession, which would mean the NHS pays the higher price for the item, the pharmacy does not make a loss and the patient receives the intended product.

I am concerned about the present situation for a number of reasons:

- An increasing amount of medications within the supply chain are starting to become unavailable leading to an increased operating cost to community pharmacies and in some instances medication is supplied at a loss due to no NCSO concession.
- The medicines with NSCO concession will be reimbursed to the dispensing contractor, however this higher medication cost will be recharged to the CCG prescribing budget, and therefore have less resources to fund other areas of the healthcare system.
- The shortages inevitably lead to increased time spent in sourcing products, discussing alternatives with GP's, time that can be spent with patients.

- The unavailability of key medicines can impact on patient care. This may lead to the decline of a patient's medical condition, increasing hospital admissions and treatment costs.

This issue affects our local community. It is not unique to our locality but it has an impact nationally. I felt this was important to bring to your attention. I hope that you are able to assist the CCG to overcome the above and help it to deliver optimised patient care for the Vale of York population.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Mettam', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phil Mettam
Accountable Officer