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To Directors of Pharmacy

Pharmacy Supply of Naloxone

Over the last five years there has been a visible increase in drug related deaths across the country, with Scotland now holding the highest drug related death rate in any European country. In 2018, 1,187 people lost their lives to drug-related deaths in Scotland. This has now been classed as a public health emergency in Scotland.

As you may be aware, the Scottish Government has established a Drugs Death Taskforce, to inform steps to reduce the harms cause by drugs, and advise on further changes in practice or in the law, which could help save lives. The Taskforce recently issued a document that set out recommendations for immediate action that should be translated into local strategies by way of a response to the drug death emergency. This includes the targeted distribution of naloxone to ensure that it is available to those people who need it. One approach that has been identified by the Taskforce to maximise naloxone distribution is to better utilise community pharmacies.

We are aware that a proposal to train all community pharmacists to administer naloxone has the support of the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, and this is being implemented as a locally enhanced pharmaceutical service. I understand that a number of Boards have progressed this already with community pharmacies already delivering an emergency naloxone supply service, and we applaud their foresight in doing so.

On behalf of the Taskforce, I would be grateful for reassurance that this is being given priority by all health boards in order to help tackle this public health emergency. If any challenges arise with funding, you should make direct contact with the Scottish Government Drug Death Task Force secretariat [Heather.Mason@gov.scot] to discuss the matter further.

In order to provide us with a clear picture of current naloxone provision through pharmacies, the Taskforce would be grateful if you could provide the following information to the secretariat [Heather.Mason@gov.scot] by 28 February 2020:

- How many pharmacies in your Board area hold provision of naloxone and are trained in its?
- What number/proportion of pharmacies are currently not providing a naloxone service?

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- Provide us with a timescale for full coverage of naloxone? (Excluding those who have opted out)
- How many pharmacies in your Board area directly supply naloxone to people at risk?

The Taskforce are aware of a number of successful administrations of naloxone by pharmacists, and we welcome the contribution pharmacy teams are making to manage this crisis situation.

We look forward to your responses.



Joe FitzPatrick
Minister for Public Health, Sport & Wellbeing



Catriona Matheson FRPharmS
Chair Drug Death Taskforce



Rose Marie Parr
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

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