



THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
appg On HIV & AIDS

Stephen Doughty MP
House of Commons
Westminster
SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

18th March 2019

Dear Secretary of State

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the APPG on HIV and AIDS to raise the Group's concerns surrounding the impact of a potential "no deal" when Britain exits the EU on 29th March. We are specifically concerned about the continuity of access to HIV medicines and the impact of ending our reciprocal health arrangements with the EU.

There are a number of HIV drugs which are either manufactured in the EU/EEA or their production process is embedded in complex, cross-border supply chains. The inevitable disruption to trade logistics attached to a no deal Brexit has created an unacceptable uncertainty around their supply. HIV medication must be taken consistently to maintain an undetectable viral load. Breaks in treatment also risk the development of drug resistance with consequences both for individual and public health.

We are aware that there has been some contingency planning, however we would like to raise concerns about the recently announced 'Serious Shortage Protocol' which gives pharmacists the right, during a Minister-determined shortage, to prescribe different or different strength medicines without consulting the prescribing doctor. We have received a number of representations from HIV charities about the lack of proper consultation on these changes. Prescribing HIV medication is a complex process which must take account of a multitude of factors. The only person qualified to safely alter the medication prescribed to a person living with HIV is that person's HIV consultant. While this Protocol may not be directly linked to our withdrawal from the EU, given the concerns around the continuity of supply chains in the event of a no deal, there is clearly a risk to HIV patients.

All Party Parliamentary Group on HIV and AIDS
514 Portcullis House, Westminster Palace, House of Commons London SW1A 0AA
Policy Advisor pellsy@parliament.uk



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We are also concerned about the future of reciprocal healthcare arrangements. We are aware that the Government has already stated that access to treatment for foreign citizens in the UK will remain the same. However, without a deal, UK citizens travelling or living within the EU will lose access to existing guaranteed rights, becoming 'third country nationals' with access to health care dependent on local arrangements.

Finally, we would like to know what the Government is planning to do to mitigate medium to long term impacts of a no deal. The regulation of new treatments and clinical trials, co-operation around public health initiatives and monitoring, and many research funding arrangements are based on our participation in EU institutions which will expire with our membership of the EU.

I would be grateful if you could reply to me and outline the Government's strategy for dealing with these concerns as outlined in my letter.

I look forward to hearing your response.

Yours Sincerely,

Stephen Doughty MP
Chair

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