



NHS Scotland
Directors of Pharmacy

Christine Gilmour
Chair
NHS Scotland Directors of
Pharmacy
Pharmacy & Prescribing

7th August 2020

Lewis Macdonald MSP
Convener, Health and Sport Committee
Scottish Parliament

Dear Mr MacDonald and committee members,

Supply and Demand for Medicines report

We write in response to the Health and Sport Committee's published report on its inquiry into "Supply and Demand for Medicines". Whilst we are pleased that the report highlights important issues, such as the need for better data systems to drive improvements in patient outcomes, overall we are disappointed with the report. Many of the conclusions put forward in the executive summary are not supported by the more positive evidence presented in the body of the report, in particular the assertions of a lack of leadership across professional groups and a lack of focus on solutions, which we believe are wholly unjustified. We have grave concerns that these declarations have a very real potential to damage both public and patient confidence in the care they currently receive. Unfortunately, the key areas for improvement that the report identifies are lost in the apparent misunderstandings, inconsistencies and inaccuracies that permeate through the report.

Directors of Pharmacy have led the establishment of a national specification, framework and funding model for Hospital Electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration (HEPMA) and have collaborated with colleagues to lead safe and effective implementations within Health Boards. This has been achieved against a back drop of significant financial challenge in Health Boards, requiring strong leadership to secure the support and additional funding essential to deliver this step change for patient safety in Scotland. The Cancer Medicines Optimisation Programme (CMOP) is another example of where pharmacy and medical colleagues

have effectively driven work to improve outcomes from cancer medicines for our population. This work demonstrates, as is recognised internationally, both the challenges and benefits of capturing and understanding patient outcomes in the real world and should be celebrated.

As leaders of the pharmacy profession, it is the *raison d'être* of the NHS Scotland Directors of Pharmacy to put patients and their families and carers at the centre of our work at all times. This has been well demonstrated by our work to ensure the needs of patients have been met during the SAR-Cov-2 pandemic. You may be aware of the global challenges in relation to the medicine supply chain which was put under further and unprecedented strain during the peak phase of SAR-Cov-2 virus. The challenge of securing extreme quantities of oxygen, renal replacement fluids, critical care medicines, palliative care and end of life medicines tested our systems as never before but was successfully met thanks to the work of pharmacists and their teams. NHS Scotland did not run out of any medicines.

Going forward we will turn our collective attention and leadership to areas of importance that can continue to improve our current systems. We look forward to being of continued service to patients in NHS Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Gilmour

Chair of NHS Scotland Directors of Pharmacy
Director of Pharmacy - NHS Lanarkshire