



Ein cyf/Our ref MA-P/VG/2581/19

Hefin David AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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9 July 2019

Dear Hefin,

In my response to your Assembly Question about the availability of over the counter pharmaceutical drugs (OAQ53150), I said that I would update you about the results of the consultation carried out by the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) and any guidance published as a result.

The consultation about draft guidance for NHS Wales regarding situations in which over the counter (OTC) medicines should not routinely be prescribed in primary care received an unprecedented number of responses. Subsequently, the draft guidance and consultation responses were discussed at the All Wales Prescribing Advisory Group (AWPAG) meeting in March. In light of consultation responses, AWPAG recommended to AWMSG that the draft guidance should not be progressed. With two exceptions, AWMSG agreed not to progress the guidance at its meeting on 26 March. The exceptions agreed by AWMSG were that the prescribing of probiotics and of vitamins and minerals should be incorporated within a future phase of its work regarding medicines identified as a low priority for funding in NHS Wales. There are no plans to progress the other proposals in the draft guidance.

Determining which medication is given on prescription is a matter for GPs and other prescribers who use their professional clinical judgement based on the patient's clinical needs. This will include, in some cases, prescribing medicines which are available over the counter where there is good evidence the medicine is clinically effective.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.