



**5 May 2023**

**To all MPs in England and Peers**

Dear Colleague,

**Supply of Hormone Replacement Therapy Products**

I wanted to update you on the current situation in terms of the supply of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) products.

The overall supply position for HRT products has improved considerably since last Spring. There are over 70 HRT products and the vast majority of those are in good supply.

Action taken to date includes:

- Holding multiple meetings with individual suppliers on a regular basis, requesting frequent stock updates, monitoring progress against plans, horizon scanning for upcoming issues, problem solving and expediting resupply dates, where needed to mitigate shortages, where possible;
- Hosting five HRT supply roundtables with suppliers, wholesalers and community pharmacists, to provide updates on the supply position and actions being taken to address them, share data and discuss relevant policy developments and potential impacts;
- Issuing 22 Serious Shortage Protocols for HRT products. Only 2 remain, one for Progynova 100microgram patches and, as explained below, a more recent one for Utrogestan 100mg capsules, as the supply disruptions with most products experiencing shortages have been resolved;
- Adding some HRT medicines to the list of products that cannot be exported from, or hoarded in, the UK. Restrictions are used to support wholesalers to meet their legal obligation to supply the UK market, but only where less trade restrictive measures are not sufficient on their own;
- Sharing communications and comprehensive management guidance with the NHS on a regular basis, to provide advice on handling of supply issues, including direction to use alternatives where available.

I am encouraged by how industry is responding to the growth in demand and our continued calls for action to boost supply to meet it. Some of the steps that have been taken to increase production have already had an effect, such as the new manufacturing facility for Oestrogel, which has meant that this product is now readily available for patients. I know that other



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suppliers have plans in the pipeline to build capacity to help ensure that they are able to meet growing demand for their products in the longer term. We will continue to work closely with them to monitor and drive progress.

Colleagues may be aware of supply issues with Utrogestan 100mg capsules and I wanted to provide some information about this situation, specifically. This product will be in intermittent supply until late 2023. Deliveries are frequently being made, but despite high volumes being supplied by the manufacturer they have struggled to meet rising demand. They are taking steps to increase supply, but in the meantime we have issued a Serious Shortage Protocol which allows pharmacists to dispense a maximum of 2 months' supply per prescription to ensure equitable distribution of available stock.

We will continue to monitor the HRT supply position very closely and work together with industry, the NHS and other key partners to help ensure the continuity of supply of HRT medicines across the UK, for everyone that needs them.

Kind regards,

**MARIA CAULFIELD**

**LORD MARKHAM CBE**