



Royal  
Pharmaceutical  
Society  
of Great Britain



The following is a joint statement endorsed and prepared by:

National Pharmacy Association

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee

Company Chemists Association

Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists

8<sup>th</sup> May 2009

Swine Flu: Influenza A (H1N1) update

Dear Colleague,

Over the last two weeks you will have undoubtedly read and received a lot of information about Influenza A (H1N1) also known as swine flu. This update has been prepared as a joint statement following productive and ongoing discussions between the pharmacy bodies and aims to reduce the sheer volume of material available and to provide a single authoritative source for ongoing developments.

In preparation for the possibility of a community level spread of Influenza A (H1N1) in the United Kingdom a number of legislative changes have been made to ensure the continuity of medicines supply.

#### Emergency supplies

1. The quantity of prescription-only-medicine which can be supplied at the request of a patient will be increased from a maximum of five treatment days to a maximum of 30 treatment days, except in the case of controlled drugs. This change is permanent and applies across the United Kingdom from the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009.
2. The requirement to interview the patient directly prior to an emergency supply at the request of the patient will be removed in the case of an announcement of a pandemic or imminent pandemic.



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### Collection points for antivirals

1. Provisions have been made to enable the selection and operation of collection points (also known as distribution points) for antiviral medicines.
2. Some of these collection points will not be pharmacy-based although it is expected a significant proportion will be. Supply of antivirals from these collection points will be protocol based.
3. Preparations are being made for collection points. Supply of antivirals via collection points will not be brought into operation until necessary. Directions will be issued by the Department of Health when needed to enable the NHS to operate collection points.

### Charges for antivirals – this advice applies to **England only**

1. From the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009 any antiviral distributed via a designated collection point under the antiviral protocol will be exempt from a charge.
2. This exemption does not apply to supplies made against an NHS prescription, including an FP10.

### Further legislative changes

1. Further legislative changes are expected to be introduced to facilitate contingency planning and continuity of medicines supply. We shall update you on these as these are enacted.

### Securing the medicines supply chain

1. During the current heightened state of alert on Influenza A (H1N1) pharmacists, whether in a community or hospital setting, should act responsibly and professionally in maintaining stocks of medicines for their patients. Arrangements or agreements which reduce the volume of medicines in the UK medicines supply chain at this time, could compromise the ability of the NHS to respond appropriately to this situation as it develops, and adversely affect individual patient care and health. Ordering medicines normally and avoiding stockpiling is the best way to show due care for the on-going treatment of patients.

**End**