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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Hywel Dda
University Health Board

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Ein cyf/Our ref:

Gofynnwch am/Please ask for:

Rhif Ffôn /Telephone:

Ffacs/Facsimile:

Dyddiad/Date:

CEO.142.0218

Emily Davies

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26 February 2018

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David Rowlands AC/AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

Email only to – SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

Re: Comments on Petition P-05-784 prescription drug dependence and withdrawal- recognition and support

Thank you for your letter of 31 January 2018. The concerns raised relating to dependence of individuals on some groups of drugs such as benzodiazepines and antidepressants have been recognised for some time. The Health Board has been working alongside GP Practices, the wider service and patients to address this area.

The national prescribing indicators published by the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) highlights that the Health Board has a higher than the national average prescribing level for benzodiazepines and anxiolytics. However, the trend graphs also reflect the ongoing work to address and show a steady decrease over the past few years, accepting there is much more to be done.

<http://www.awmsg.org/docs/awmsg/medman/National%20Prescribing%20Indicators%202017-2018.pdf>

The Health Board supports the review of prescribing of antidepressants and benzodiazepines through the work of the primary care pharmacist teams and the GP cluster pharmacist roles. There is a significant amount of supporting material provided by AWMSG which is used regularly by these teams in order to address the concerns and to work with Practices and individuals to reduce dependency and support slow and controlled withdrawals appropriately. This

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Cadeirydd / Chair
Mrs Bernardine Rees OBE

Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive
Mr Steve Moore

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Mae Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Hywel Dda yn amgylchedd di-fwg Hywel Dda University Health Board operates a smoke free environment

can be progressed through on going medication reviews and/or specific clinics focusing on benzodiazepine and antidepressant prescribing, this will include counselling and close monitoring of progress.

The Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Directorate, Community Drug and Alcohol Team (CDAT), provides specialist multi-disciplinary assessment and treatment interventions, (pharmacological and non-pharmacological), in the area of substance misuse. The CDAT service continues to offer and provide advice to GPs on the reduction of Benzodiazepines when faced with prescribed drug dependence. This level of advice is available when dealing with prescribed drug dependence, (benzodiazepines and other Gabaergic drugs and opiates), to prescribers from the CDAT, and Tier 2 services are available to provide support through the process. In addition to offering advice, the Tier 2 services support individuals through the process of reduction.

There is a significant resource requirement for on-going training and education to further inform and support prescribers when dealing with such complex clinical scenarios.

The availability of supporting services and networks to provide alternatives to initiation of a prescription is key, and the Health Board encourages sign posting individuals to support services where appropriate. Certain GP clusters are commissioning additional counselling services to support individuals to help to prevent the commencement of these medicines and also to support those who are currently receiving prescriptions.

The Health Board appreciates the focus on this issue as it continues to work to reduce the potential negative impact on individuals. Any opportunities to learn from other Health Boards or organisations is welcomed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Moore
Chief Executive