

MEDIA RELEASE

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PAGB response to the NHS new commissioning guidance on Conditions for which over-the-counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care

In response to the new guidance¹ launched by NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners, John Smith, Chief Executive said, "PAGB believes it is important to empower people to self care to help to reduce the number of unnecessary GP consultations and A&E visits* for conditions that could be treated at home, or with advice from a pharmacist. Therefore, we welcome the ambition that NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners have outlined within the guidance to encourage more people to self care.

"NHS services are overstretched and it's important that limited resources are used in the most effective way to help the NHS save money and free up GP's time to deal with more serious concerns. However, PAGB believes that simply restricting healthcare professionals' ability to prescribe, without offering support to empower people to self care, could result in more GP appointments from people confused as to how to treat their symptoms. That's why we have been calling for a national strategy for self care to provide the leadership and policy co-ordination necessary to support this behaviour change.

"Supporting people to self care for minor illnesses is essential for the future sustainability of the NHS, both in terms of reducing costs and demand as well as ensuring people are seen by the right healthcare professional at the right time."

- ENDS -

Notes to editors:

* There are an estimated 57 million GP consultations and 3.7 million visits to A&E every year for minor illnesses, costing the NHS an estimated £2.3 billion^{2,3}.

PAGB (Proprietary Association of Great Britain) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of branded over-the-counter medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements.

For further information, please contact Pegasus: Lauren Walker or Amy Skinner on 01273 712000 / PAGB@thisispegasus.co.uk

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/otc-guidance-for-ccgs.pdf>

² IMS Health, Minor ailment workload in general practice, 2007.

³ IMS Health study of self treatable conditions presenting in A&E units 2014. Data source: HES data. Health Episode Statistics. Re-used with the permission of the Health and Social Care Information Centre. All rights reserved.