



Media Release

For Immediate Release

Minor Ailments Scheme Fact Finding Visit

Dr Mark Hayes the Chief Clinical Officer and Becky Case Senior Improvement & Innovation Manager at Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group visited Rowlands Pharmacy, 66 Doncaster Rd, Selby, YO8 9AJ at 11am Friday 20th February 2015. The purpose of their visit was to gather information and facts on how a minor ailments scheme would operate in practice and discuss the benefits for patients.

Minor ailments are defined as, 'common or self-limiting or uncomplicated conditions which can be diagnosed and managed without medical intervention'.¹

Pharmacy based services to treat such ailments were introduced locally across the UK more than ten years ago² to reduce the burden of minor ailments on higher cost settings such as general practice and the A&E departments of hospitals. Consultations for minor ailments are less expensive when provided through community pharmacy and evidence suggests that the pharmacy based service provides a suitable alternative to GP consultations.³

Each year 8% of A&E department visits involve consultations for minor ailments, costing the NHS £136 million annually.⁴ With the change in NHS systems architecture, and the prevailing economic climate, services such as

¹ [Self care: an ethical imperative](#). Self Care Campaign, 2010

² [Pharmacy in the future: implementing the NHS Plan](#). Department of Health, 2000

³ Paudyal V, et al. [Are pharmacy based minor ailment schemes a substitute for other service providers?](#) Br J Gen Pract 2013; 63 (612), July 2013: 472-481

⁴ Bednall R, et al. [Identification of patients attending accident and emergency who may be suitable for treatment by a pharmacist](#). Fam Pract 2003; 20(1): 54-57

these reduce costs, create GP time for the management of more complex, long-term conditions and have a positive impact on urgent and emergency services.

The NHS England evidence base report on the urgent care review, published in June 2013, highlighted the role that pharmacies could play in providing accessible care and helping many patients who would otherwise visit their GP for minor ailments.⁵

“Community pharmacy services can play an important role in enabling self-care, particularly amongst patients with minor ailments and long term conditions.”

Around 80% of all care in the UK is self-care and this is an area in which community pharmacy can make a real difference. NHS England highlighted that self-care for minor ailments can reduce dependence on emergency care services; there is a need to improve awareness among patients about how to access self-care support services; and there is a need to ensure such services are used consistently by patients.

The current workload of general practice is not declining, with a review of 1,800 GPs using the validated Maslach Burnout Inventory indicating in May 2013 that 43% of practitioners are at high risk of burnout.⁶ The consequential diversion of patients to urgent care, such as A&E departments, could be reversed if a community pharmacy service is implemented, freeing up GP appointments and capacity in A&E departments.

Dr Mark Hayes said “We need to encourage more people to make better use of their local pharmacies. Pharmacists are highly trained and can be a more convenient option than visiting your local GP or A&E in many cases. We are in discussion with Community Pharmacy North Yorkshire on proposals to implement a scheme within the Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group area.

A Pharmacy Minor Ailments Scheme could not only reduce the pressure on our GP Surgeries and A&E, but also free up GPs to offer more services locally. Delivering health services within the communities where people live and work is always important and I hope this would help deliver that.”

⁵ [High quality care for all, now and for future generations: transforming urgent and emergency care services in England: The Evidence Base from the Urgent and Emergency Care Review](#). NHS England, June 2013

⁶ Duffin, C. [One in eight GPs have sought help for stress in past year](#). Pulse, August 2013

End

Editor Notes

People in the attached photos right to left

Dr Mark Hayes the Chief Clinical Officer, Becky Case Senior Improvement & Innovation Manager at Vale of York Clinical Commissioning and Lorraine Gell Pharmacist at Rowlands Pharmacy 66 Doncaster Rd, Selby, YO8 9AJ

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