

# Changes

## to how your HIV medication is prescribed

a patient information publication

provided

(In cooperation with patient representative groups)

by:

**The London Specialised  
Commissioning Group**

On behalf of:

**All HIV clinics across Greater London**

# Changes to how your HIV Medication is prescribed

The London Specialised Commissioning Group together with London's HIV lead clinicians have successfully negotiated terms, with the pharmaceutical companies, which mean discounts in return for larger orders for particular HIV drugs. In the present economic climate we need to take advantage of this. These changes apply to all London HIV clinics.

## How will this affect me?

Probably very little. Some people may be asked to change their medication. However this will only be recommended, to you, if your HIV doctor considers it is clinically appropriate. You, with your doctor, are in charge of your treatment. Your doctor will discuss any proposed changes with you and this is a good opportunity to review your treatment. The alternative drugs may be better suited to your needs. You will not be forced to change your medication.

Your doctor may also discuss with you the option of home delivery which saves us the VAT on your drugs. Because of the high cost of the drugs, for every ten people who opt for this we can release funds for one additional person to have treatment despite the cost of the delivery.

## Are these drugs as good?

Yes. Drugs are selected first on the basis of how well they work and the number and severity of possible side effects. Then price is considered. Frequently two or more drugs will have similar performance but the price may vary considerably. Our policy on treatment follows the guidelines issued by the British HIV Association (BHIVA).

## **Why is this being done?**

Funds for health services are not growing at the same rate as the demand for them. HIV is no exception. This means we have to find ways of making the funding go further.

## **What if I have had a treatment failure?**

Whatever medication is necessary will be prescribed. This includes the option of the latest most expensive drugs. However very expensive treatments will only be used where there is no alternative.

## **Should these changes worry me?**

No. This is a “stitch in time”. The purpose of these changes is to safeguard HIV services by using the most cost-effective options. All the drugs now in use will continue to be available.

## **What are the benefits of the new policy?**

We shall be able to provide treatment for more people within our budget. The major cost in HIV treatment is medication. Money saved on drugs will help to maintain care for patients. Be assured all patients will continue to receive treatment.

## **What is the downside?**

Some new patients might be taking two tablets once a day instead of one. If this is a problem for you then you must mention this to your HIV doctor who will ensure your treatment, is appropriate to your needs.

## **Further Information**

If you need further clarification or have any concerns about the issues raised here please ask your doctor, or a nurse, for more detail. Alternatively page (3) has details of someone you can contact to discuss any questions you may have.

If you need further clarification or have any concerns about the issue raised in this leaflet please do contact:

Tel:

ext:

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## **HIV Clinics in London**

HIV services are commissioned (bought) by the London Specialised Commissioning Group. This is a component of the NHS. It provides the funds to your clinic and it provides, separately, the funding for your drugs. There are 23 clinics across London and anyone is free to select any one of those clinics for their treatment.

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## **Patient Views**

Some of those clinics have patient forums to which all their patients are invited to attend. There are also other forums which operate independent of the clinics. These give you the chance to air your views on the delivery of services.

Forums send representatives to the pan London HIV Consortium's Public Patient Engagement sub group. Individual patients may put themselves forward too. Here there is a direct conversation with the commissioners and providers of services.

If you would like to attend the PPE sub group please contact:

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