

14 June 2011

Deborah Jack
NAT
New City Cloisters
196 Old Street
London EC1V 9FR

Dear Deborah

I am writing in response to your letter regarding the therapeutic tender of antiretroviral in London.

The tender process was led by the London HIV Consortium involving HIV clinicians, public health, patient representatives and commissioners. The aim of the tender process was to reduce the cost of antiretroviral drugs for London whilst protecting clinical quality and care.

The tender is a commercially confidential process. Now that it is completed, information about the process including prescribing messages written by clinicians has been posted on the London Specialised Commissioning Group website www.londonscg.nhs.uk

Patients on the Patient and Public Engagement Sub Group have also produced a patient information leaflet to help explain the process and this is now uploaded to the website and has been sent to all clinics.

Your letter was discussed at a recent meeting of all the HIV Clinical Leads and members of the Consortium Drugs & Treatment Sub Group.

The meeting confirmed

- The primacy of the clinician – patient relationship remains at the centre of care and treatment. As always, HIV doctors will continue to discuss treatment options (including benefits, risks and cost rationale) with patients and patients will only be switched treatment where it is clinically appropriate to do so and patients agree. Targeting of particular patient groups for treatment switches on a non-clinical basis is not appropriate.
- That audit will take place for the next 24 months of all patients affected by the new prescribing messages. Analysis will assess clinical outcomes by clinic and include ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. The Audit and Outcomes Sub Group will review the audit results during this time.
- The key prescribing messages are in line with national and international guidelines. Prescribing continues to be on the basis of what is clinically appropriate.

- The London HIV Consortium and all London Clinics are committed to working together to reduce the costs of antiretrovirals. Money saved by using clinically appropriate, but less expensive HIV drugs will continue to be invested in HIV. Individual London clinics will not be rewarded for inappropriate prescribing, nor will they be sanctioned for treating patients in a clinically appropriate manner.
- The importance of continuing to involve people with HIV and HIV organisations in developing creative solutions that deliver quality and productivity improvements within existing resources.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simon Hillier". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Divisional Director
London Specialised Commissioning Group