

Professor Paul Cosford
Director for Health Protection and Medical Director
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Via email: paul.cosford@phe.gov.uk

4 February 2015

Dear Professor Cosford

Tamiflu for the prophylaxis of influenza in nursing and care homes

I am writing to you following concerns raised by a number of GPs from across England about inappropriate pressure from PHE to prescribe Tamiflu for the prophylaxis of influenza in nursing and care homes where there have been confirmed cases of influenza

GMS regulations are clear that this service is not included under essential services that practices are required to provide for their registered patients. Essential Services are defined in the GMS regulations with reference to regulations 15(3) (5) (6) and (8). Additional work must be commissioned and funded separately as an Enhanced service. Examples of these are the influenza vaccination programme and catch up MMR vaccination campaign.

As widely reported recently, a BMA Tracker survey highlighted that 74% of GPs described their workload as unmanageable or unsustainable - significantly higher than any other category of doctor. In this climate, it is crucial that the safe provision of core services to patients remain GPs overriding priority. NHS England explicitly recognises the strain general practice is under in its recent Five Year Forward View. Therefore the work involved in assessing patients and prescribing Tamiflu where appropriate cannot be simply absorbed by already saturated GP services.

Chief Executive: Keith Ward

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We would be happy to meet with you to discuss the development of an enhanced service. Until this has been negotiated we will be advising GPs to pass this work back to PHE to deliver.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dr Dean Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr Dean Marshall
Executive Team Lead, BMA General Practitioners Committee

CC.

Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health