

24 March 2010

Rt Hon the Lord Cunningham of Felling
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Dear *Jack*

In the exchange following Lord Patel's Question on prescription drugs on 17 March 2010, I promised that I would write to you with further information.

The Department recognises that the current medicines supply problems are causing difficulties for some patients. There is no evidence that those in predominantly rural areas are being any more affected than others. This is mainly due to the efforts of those providing dispensing services - community pharmacies and dispensing practices alike.

In addition, most big pharmaceutical companies have already put in place special arrangements in response to the current supply problems so that pharmacies and dispensing practices can usually obtain the product directly from the manufacturer or through alternative contingency arrangements where they are unable to secure supply via the usual routes.

Both community pharmacies (through the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee and the National Pharmacy Association) and dispensing practices (through the Dispensing Doctors Association) were represented at the summit. The robust set of actions agreed are expected to continue to keep the risk to patients at minimal levels, wherever they live.

I hope this is helpful and I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library.

Yes
Glenys
GLENYS THORNTON