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Jonathan Morgan AM
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
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Eich cyf • Your ref:
Ein cyf • Our ref:PMW/VTURNER/BS

29 September 2010

Dear Jonathan

HOME OXYGEN THERAPY SERVICES

I agreed to write to you with details of the Local Health Boards (LHBs) Patient Assessment Service Action Plans for 2010/2011.

The analysis undertaken by my officials in conjunction with members of the Oxygen Therapy Reference group (OTRG) has now been completed. The overall results are encouraging and show a clear recognition and commitment by LHBs to the prioritisation, development and delivery of an equitable and effective patient assessment service.

In the development of their individual Action Plans, LHBs have identified several achievements in the delivery of the service in 2010/2011. Examples of this include:

- The development of a patient information leaflet which provides clear advice on the service;
- An annual survey for both patient and carer users to monitor the service being provided and identify particular areas for development and improvement;
- A protocol for dealing with patients who refuse to be assessed or have their oxygen removed or reduced following assessment;



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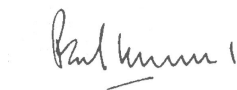
- Improvements in communication between the oxygen service and primary and secondary care, including more collaborative work with GPs providing training and advice on the patient assessment service;
- Closer monitoring of the Home Oxygen Ordering Form (HOOF) and greater scrutiny of payment invoices, both of which will reduce unnecessary expenditure on oxygen provision;
- An integrated oxygen assessment service across LHB localities, ensuring that a robust governance structure is in place;
- Clear ownership within the LHBs for the delivery of the individual actions and overall delivery of the Action Plans.

Whilst it is recognised that improvements continue to be made, there is still a need to ensure that ongoing regular monitoring of the service continues. It is also critical that LHBs continue to recognise the importance of providing both an efficient and effective service to patients.

I am satisfied that LHBs are demonstrating that they are addressing the need to have good processes in place, as well as action plans which will continue to improve the delivery of an effective and efficient patient assessment service, which will also deliver savings. The Action Plans will be closely monitored by the Reference Group and officials, working closely with the 7 LHB oxygen leads.

The full impact of the savings achieved in 2009/2010 on the home oxygen contract, including how the additional funding provided by the Welsh Assembly Government for the patient assessment service is driving those savings, will be reported to the Committee at the end of this year.

Yours sincerely



Paul Williams