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Dear Chief Executives and SHA Pharmacy/Prescribing Leads

Care Quality Commission (CQC): The Safer Management of Controlled Drugs Annual Report 2011.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is responsible for making sure healthcare providers and regulators are creating a safer environment for the management of controlled drugs. In support of this, the CQC issue an annual report, the fifth of which for 2011 was published on 26th July 2012. It is available now for download from the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk.

I am writing to you to draw your attention to the report and its recommendations. In this latest report, the CQC have described how partners have continued working to improve the safer management of controlled drugs and has looked at how the changes in healthcare legislation are affecting the arrangements for safer management of controlled drugs and report on the progress that has been made on recommendations from their 2010 report.

For its 2011 report, the CQC has made seven recommendations, as follows:

- Designated body organisations should ensure that they notify CQC promptly when the controlled drugs accountable officer for their organisation changes, to ensure that this is not overlooked in a period of change. The newly-appointed accountable offer must also make contact with the accountable offer leading the LIN.
- The responsible officer and the controlled drugs accountable officer should work collaboratively on areas of mutual concern to ensure that the processes for oversight of controlled drugs are suitably robust.
- Controlled drugs accountable officers should ensure that they have systems in place to assure the safe prescribing and administration of controlled drugs in all situations where controlled drugs are used.

- Medicines safety, risk and clinical governance groups must always include the controlled drugs accountable officer when incidents involving controlled drugs are reported so that opportunities for local and national learning are not missed.
- Controlled drugs accountable officers should ensure that suitable systems are in place to ensure the safe and effective use of transdermal fentanyl patches. This should include ongoing education of all staff involved in prescribing, dispensing, administering and disposing of transdermal fentanyl patches.
- The use of methylphenidate and dexamphetamine should be monitored carefully to ensure that they are being prescribed appropriately in all sectors.
- The use of a standard Controlled Drugs Requisition Form (FP10 CDF) should be encouraged more actively.

I am writing to you to emphasise how important your role is in providing support to CDAOs as they continue to ensure the safe management of these controlled drugs during a period of reorganisation for the NHS. The recommendations for any departing or newly appointed CDAOs to notify both the CQC and the lead CDAO of the Local Intelligence Network, to work more collaboratively with Responsible Officers in areas of mutual concern and to ensure systems are in place to assure the safe prescribing and administration of controlled drugs in all situations where controlled drugs are used will help strengthen local governance systems and accountability.

I appreciate we are in challenging times, but I would ask for your continued help and support in ensuring that the good gains that have been made over the last five years continue during this period of change.

If you have further questions or need further information please do not hesitate to get in touch with Robert Allan at the Department of Health on 0113 254 6312 or by emailing him at Robert.allan@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. W. Ridge', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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