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Friday 8th May 2009

To: Community Pharmacies
DAAT
Health Protection Unit

Dear Colleague

We are writing to inform you about a hepatitis B and hepatitis C pharmacy testing pilot project that will be running from 19th May – 19th August 2009 in the following local pharmacies:

Alliance Pharmacy Sandown, Boots the Chemist Cowes, Boots the Chemist Ryde, Boots the Chemist Sandown, Day Lewis Pharmacy Cowes, Gibbs and Gurnell Ryde, Lloyds Pharmacy Pyle Street, Lloyds Pharmacy Pyle Street, Lloyds Pharmacy Esplanade Ryde, Regent Pharmacy (please see attached signposting document detailing service leads and phone numbers)

This pilot is a joint project with the Isle of Wight PCT and the Hepatitis C Trust. The pharmacies involved will offer free, confidential dry blood spot hepatitis B and C tests to customers who think they have been at risk of contracting either of these viruses.

The pharmacists involved are undergoing a full day of comprehensive training to prepare them for this additional service. The anonymised results will be published by the Hepatitis C Trust following a full project evaluation later this year.

If a client receives a positive diagnosis, their GP will automatically be notified by the pharmacy so that the GP can ensure the client enters into an appropriate care pathway, and has the opportunity to give advice on the recent advances in treatments for these conditions.

In addition to this, and as a separate service, the Pharmacists at these practices will also be offering hepatitis B vaccinations to injecting drug users and clients engaged with IDAS who are deemed as "at risk" under a local PGD. This client group are extremely difficult to reach, as they often do not engage with Healthcare Professionals, and are highlighted as high risk in the Dept of Health publication "The Green Book".

We hope this information is helpful to you in case you receive any enquiries about this new service from your service-users.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch:

- Kevin Noble, Community Pharmacy Lead (PCT contact)
- Jane Allen, The Hepatitis C Trust, jane.allen@hepctrust.org.uk, 020 7089 6220
- Hazel Allen, Clinical Nurse Specialist, hazel.allen@rbch.nhs.uk, 01202 303626

Yours sincerely,

Charles Gore, Chief Executive
The Hepatitis C Trust

Kevin Noble, Community Pharmacy Lead
NHS Isle of Wight