



Medicines & Medical Devices Criticality Assessment Groups

Thursday, 05th March 2020

Location: HPRA, Earlsfort Terrace

Attendees: **HSE:** Fergal Collins, Sean Bresnan, Risteard Prendergast, Lisa Kelly, Kathy Hassell, Fionnuala King, Shane Doyle, Patricia Heckmann, Ger Flynn, Dr. Lucy Jessop, Emma Benton, Maeve Hynes
HPRA: Lorraine Nolan, Grainne Power, Judith Martin, Niall MacAleenan, Emer O'Neill, Larry O'Dwyer, Caitriona Fisher, Darren Scully
DoH: Fergal Goodman (*Chair*), Mary Hyland, Breifne O'Rourke

Introduction:

- Meeting informed that Government has increased its focus on the potential impact of Covid-19 on the health system, as well as society as a whole.
- The Group was previously established to work on Brexit related supply issues but for all Covid-19 related work, the group will be governed as a National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) subgroup. This is referenced in the Terms of Reference for the group.
- The two legs of the Groups' work under the Terms of Reference highlighted as being:
 - the products required for the treatment and management of Covid-19 itself;
 - vulnerabilities of the health service's general supply chain in light of the potential broader impact of the disease's spread globally.

Aims for today's meeting:

- To identify priority actions to address the possibility of an extreme escalation in case numbers in the next 10 to 14 days, including identification of which medicines and medical devices will be needed urgently in the event of a spike of cases in Ireland.
- To maintain awareness of the medium-term impact on the health service as a whole when mapping the broader approach to the challenges faced.

DoH outlined recent developments and areas of focus:

- Acknowledged:
 - that work is already being carried out by agencies in attendance;
 - the impact of developments in China, India and Italy to date on supply chains;
 - that further spread of the disease to other countries/regions could increase this kind of disruption to supply chains.
- Noted that these Groups will benefit from the pre-existence of structures which were successful in the Brexit working groups. However, Covid-19 represents a comparatively immediate risk of disruption to supplies, whereas the Brexit groups worked in a primarily preparatory setting.
- A meeting this morning among supply chain stakeholders established the basis for a unified message as regards the health system's responses, in order to prevent misperception among public and healthcare professionals of a need to build up additional stocks of medicines and devices.

HSE update:



- HSE Procurement confirmed that it is initially working on the basis of the WHO's priority list and seeking information from hospitals on existing stocks and requirements with respect to medical devices.
- HSE has ringfenced a level of supplies for PPE for distribution, strictly proportionate to needs.
- The AHDMP will seek input from the relevant clinical programmes to confirm medicines of importance in the context of Covid-19; begin work on approach to engagement with MAHs with respect to seeking supply information.

Discussion on Priority Products List development:

- The WHO's priority list of medicines will be the basis for immediate work but will need to be refined over time, with significant clinical input.
 - An expanding range of services will come into focus as the areas of most urgent concern are progressively addressed.
- The HSE High Consequences Infectious Diseases Planning and Coordination Group (HCID) group within the HSE has been stood down; however, the HSE will be able to open lines of communication for the members of the HCID with the Criticality Groups, and with the Expert Advisory Group.

Vaccines

- Terms of Reference does not specifically mention vaccines however the National Immunisation Office will keep in contact with DoH in this regard, as work is progressed towards a vaccine. To date, no issues in relation to vaccinations have been reported.

Diagnostic devices

- The NVRL in UCD is currently carrying out diagnostic testing.
- Testing capacity will need to be increased which will consequences for procurement.

Next steps:

- Separate weekly meetings for each of the two groups, going forward
- By next Thursday (12 March), the Groups to establish:
 - Work carried out to date;
 - Overview of current stock situation;
 - Any developments arising in the intervening period.
- DoH to chair meetings to agree prioritised products for the Medicines Criticality Group.
 - As per discussion above, this will begin with a review of the WHO's priority list.
- HSE to identify what clinical input can be made available to development of products prioritisation.
 - HSE to survey and summarise existing stock levels and locations.