

To:
Trust Chief Executives
(for onward cascade as per the
attached distribution list)

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4th June 2018

Dear Colleague

CHOICE OF INSULIN GLARGINE

The HSCB Pharmacy and Medicines Management team, in conjunction with Trust Pharmacy colleagues, is working with prescribers in primary and secondary care to implement a number of 'boost' projects where the use of a consistent cost effective product in both primary and secondary care will support the delivery of a consistent message to patients, whilst producing financial savings for the health service.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an update with regard to the choice of insulin glargine.

NPH insulin remains the first line choice of insulin for people with type 2 diabetes, except in certain circumstances (See NICE NG281). When a long-acting human analogue insulin is indicated in type 2 diabetes, insulin glargine is recommended by NICE. Insulin should always be prescribed by brand, and not generically, for safety reasons.

£3.4 million is spent on Insulin Glargine per year in Northern Ireland, with Lantus® being the most commonly prescribed brand. However, the biosimilar brand, Abasaglar® currently costs the NHS approximately 7% less.

USE OF ABASAGLAR®

Abasaglar® is the most cost effective choice of insulin glargine and has been included in the NI formulary since 2017. It should be chosen as the first line option when insulin glargine is appropriate.

Initially, when there was a bigger price differential between Lantus® and Abasaglar®, a controlled protocol for switching patients from the former to the latter was being considered as a viable way to produce financial efficiencies. Following a reduction in the price of Lantus®, HSCB and Trusts have agreed that the savings released do not warrant the resources involved in executing a switch programme. This does not preclude patients who are not meeting their personal targets on their Lantus® insulin being switched to a more cost effective insulin, in the setting of an individual consultation.

I recognise the support that Trusts have given to the implementation of this cost-effective initiative and would like to thank everyone for their work on this to-date. HSCB will continue to work with colleagues from the Trusts' diabetes teams to explore the most cost effective use of insulin.

If you require further information, please contact Karen Dolan, HSCB Pharmacy Adviser at Karen.dolan@hscni.net

Yours sincerely



Joe Brogan
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Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management

¹ Type 2 diabetes in adults: management NICE guideline [NG28] Last updated: May 2017

² [NI Formulary insulins](#) Reviewed: July 2017