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Dear Colleagues

UPDATED LITHIUM CARE PATHWAY

The Lithium Care Pathway has been reviewed and updated by a multidisciplinary team, including representatives from primary and secondary care and may be accessed at the link below:

<http://www.medicinesgovernance.hscni.net/joint-publications/medicines-safety-documents/lithium/>

The purpose of the pathway is to provide direction on appropriate ongoing management of patients following initial assessment and initiation of Lithium in Secondary care.

As with the previous pathway document, patients are divided into three categories based on whether their ongoing review and monitoring is to be managed by Secondary care, Primary care or shared between the two (see table 1).

Table 1: Lithium Care Options

Pathway 1	Pathway 2	Pathway 3
Patient remains in Secondary Care for review and monitoring. Lithium blood monitoring results copied to Primary Care*.	Patient remains in Secondary Care for review but, with agreement between GP and Secondary Care, monitoring passes to primary Care. Lithium blood monitoring results copied to Secondary Care*.	If patient stable or strong patient preference, with agreement between GP and Secondary Care, review and monitoring passes to Primary Care. Lithium blood monitoring results not copied to Secondary Care*.

*A communication proforma from secondary care to primary care will advise of the pathway the patient will follow and responsibilities for review and monitoring. Primary and secondary care lithium registers should be updated using this information.

The main change to the 2011/2012 version is the **additional requirement to monitor calcium levels**, in line with NICE guidance (nice.org.uk/guidance/cg185). GP payment for this is funded by the NILES Additional Monitoring of Amber Drugs.

All clinicians are asked to familiarise themselves with this pathway and its associated documentation in order to ensure effective communication and maximise patient care.

Yours sincerely,



Joe Brogan
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Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management

CC. Trust Chief Executives