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Dear Sir/Madam

National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

This document was welcomed within Havering PCT where it has been widely circulated.

As alcohol misuse appears to be increasing, partly due to greater access from supermarkets together with the development of new types of alcoholic drinks known as alco-pops; all of which give cause for concern within primary care.

If Trusts such as ours are to promote healthy lifestyles as well as provide healthcare for patients with alcohol related problems then it is felt an overarching strategic approach is required. The PCT thought the inclusion of crime and disorder, together with better statistical information and cultural and behavioural issues, which play a much wider role in alcohol misuse, were seen as essential elements of a modern multicultural strategy.

Another issue raised was that of "clarity of purpose" and how we communicate with the general public was seen as crucial. The confusion regarding the units of alcohol males and females can consume appears to be a real issue in primary care, with both care professionals and patients unsure of the correct guidance due to the many conflicting messages surrounding this issue.

Other questions around the flexibility such a strategy would require were seen as important in order to reflect the local needs of PCT populations. The HIMP is a good example of such a strategy as it should be recognised that good models of care that appear to give excellent results do not necessarily work when applied in other localities or countries. Therefore, consideration needs to be given as to how success is to be measured against local, well researched initiatives within such national strategies.

Havering PCT wholeheartedly supports the concept of a National Strategy and overall felt these proposed reforms were to be commended. We would again thank you for affording the Trust the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely



Ralph W. McCormack
Chief Executive

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