

2019.06.04

2 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier of the Minister for Social Security regarding the expenditure by pharmacies on medication: (OQ.144/2019)

Will the Minister advise whether any cutbacks to how much pharmacies can spend on medication have been implemented over the last 18 months?

Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier (The Minister for Social Security):

The answer is no. But the Deputy has explained to me why she has asked this question, so I will let her explain that in a supplementary and hope I can come back to her, but it is quite difficult. The answer is no to the question.

4.2.1 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Is the Minister aware that some pharmacies are swapping medication for cheaper generic brands and that this can cause patients to have severe side effects and sometimes dangerous ones? For example, in a case of an epileptic, who contacted me, stating that they have been on the same brand of epilepsy medication for 20 years and have been fit-free over this period. They are now having to take a different brand, which is causing them to shake uncontrollably and risking having a fit.

Deputy J.A. Martin:

Pharmacies decide with the manufacturer how much they are going to spend on the medicine and we do come to a cost and we advise generic if it is between ... I have just learnt this in the last 5 minutes, that if the doctor puts on the prescription exactly what they want to be prescribed, the pharmacy should fulfil that. That is about as much as I can go, because the actual question was asking if there were any cutbacks to pharmacies to spend on medication in the last 18 months and the answer is still no.

4.2.2 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Will the Minister liaise with the Minister for Health and Social Services to ensure that patients are not put through unacceptable side effects? As this particular individual is having to travel on a monthly basis to get the medication - they have other illnesses as well - from one side of the Island to the other, because there is only one chemist that supplies the brand they have been on.

Deputy J.A. Martin:

Absolutely and after, if the Deputy would like to talk to me and this is particularly one case and we will go as far ... I do not think it is the Minister for Health and Social Services, if it is a community pharmacy and it is being delivered in one pharmacy, I am sure we can sort this out and I will speak to the Deputy.