

CONFIDENTIAL

JR

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

25 February 1985

Dear Steve,

LIMITED LIST OF NHS DRUGS

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's letter of 16 February to the Lord President, in which he set out proposals for a leaflet to explain the Government's decision on the limited list.

The Prime Minister is content with what is proposed, subject to the views of colleagues.

I am sending copies of this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), John Graham (Scottish Office), Colin Jones (Welsh Office), Neil Ward (Northern Ireland Office) and Bernard Ingham at No. 10.

Yours ever,
David

(DAVID BARCLAY)

Steve Godber, Esq.,
Department of Health and Social Security.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
 Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
 Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon The Viscount Whitelaw CH MC
 Lord President of the Council
 Privy Council Office
 68 Whitehall
 LONDON
 SW1A 2AT

16 February 1985

Dear Willie.

Prime Minister (2)

A good idea, though the leaflet could be improved.

LIMITED LIST OF NHS DRUGS

I wrote to you on 15 February about my announcement of the final limited list and the Parliamentary arrangements for its introduction. I am writing now about how we should explain to the public what is involved.

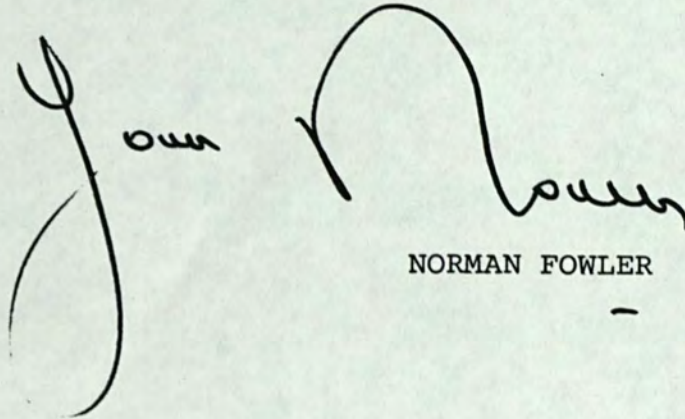
After the limited list comes into effect on 1 April, a great many people will find themselves being given a different medicine from that which they have been used to. In many cases their doctors will explain the change carefully and sensibly but I think we have to do everything we can to help the process go as smoothly as possible. I shall therefore be producing leaflets - of which I attach a draft - explaining the change which can be available in every doctor's surgery and in every chemist's shop. That will help to deal with the change when it happens. But I think we also need to prepare the ground in advance. I therefore propose, subject to your agreement, to place advertisements in the national press as soon as the Regulations have been laid. The advertisements seek to explain simply how the limited list will operate - on lines similar to the leaflet.

I see this as important if we are to prepare for a smooth introduction for the list. It will also help to reassure the public following the misleading comment and advertising which we have seen in the last few months.

I shall, of course, be briefing our Parliamentary colleagues and the media separately to ensure that they are fully in touch with the details of the final limited list, and the arguments for sticking to our policy. I expect to be writing to colleagues directly after my statement so that they are able to deal with the further attacks which we must expect, particularly from the pharmaceutical industry.

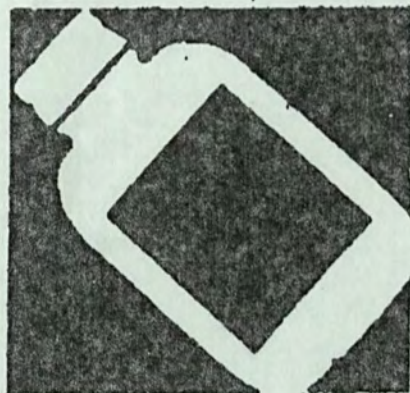
E.R.

I am copying this letter to George Younger, Nick Edwards, Douglas Hurd and to the Prime Minister's Chief Press Officer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'N' followed by 'orman Fowler'. The word 'Norman' is written in a cursive script, and 'Fowler' is written in a more legible, slightly cursive font.

NORMAN FOWLER

NHS Medicine Changes



What it means to you

A CHANGE IN THE MEDICINES YOU CAN GET ON YOUR NHS PRESCRIPTION

. What is the change?

From 1 April 1985 you can no longer get some medicines on NHS prescription. ONLY the following medicines are affected:

- . Mild pain killers

- . Cough and cold remedies

- . Vitamins

- . Laxatives

- . Tonics

- . Indigestion remedies

- . Mild sedatives and tranquillisers

But you can still get fully effective medicines in each of these groups. And you can still get all the medicines in the other groups on NHS prescription, as before.

. What does the change mean?

There are very many medicines in each of the groups listed above. Many of these have exactly the same effect. Where this is the case, we have worked out which medicines represent the best value for money; and these are the only ones you can now get on NHS prescription.

You may have to change to a different medicine, but it will be just as good as the one you were using before.

. Can you get the medicines that are no longer on NHS prescription?

Yes. If you wish to continue using the same medicine and you can no longer get it on NHS prescription, you can buy it from your pharmacy. For some medicines you will need a non-NHS prescription from your doctor, before your pharmacy can sell them.

. Why has the change been made?

By limiting the range of medicines you can get in the groups listed above we can make a considerable money saving and still give just as good treatment as before. This money is needed to improve other parts of the NHS.

The medicine you get will be just as good as the one you were using before.

YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST WILL ADVISE YOU.

ISSUED BY THE UK HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Not Health; NHS Expenditure: Pt 4

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