

UK group warns hospitals could run out of drugs post Brexit

August 21 2018, by Jill Lawless

A group that represents U.K. hospitals and ambulance services has warned that its members may run out of drugs if Britain leaves the European Union without an agreement on future relations.

In a letter published Tuesday, NHS Providers said a lack of "visible and appropriate communication" from the [government](#) is hampering preparations for a so-called no-deal Brexit.

In a letter to National Health Service bosses that was leaked to the Times of London, the group's chief executive said it would be more efficient to develop contingency plans nationally rather than "have to reinvent the wheel 229 times."

Chris Hopson said "the entire supply chain of pharmaceuticals" could be affected by the failure to reach a deal, adding that it could also "jeopardize" the EU workforce "on which the NHS relies."

Britain is due to leave the EU on March 29, and aims to hammer out an agreement with the bloc on divorce terms and the outlines of future trade in the next few months so that it can be approved by individual EU countries before Brexit day.

But talks have got bogged down amid infighting within Prime Minister Theresa May's divided Conservative government, and fears of a "no-deal" Brexit are growing. Last week Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics put the chances of getting a Brexit deal at 50-50.

British businesses have warned that leaving without a deal could cause mayhem for trade and travel, bringing higher food prices, logjams around U.K. ports and disruption to everything from aviation to medical supplies.

The U.K. government says it remains confident of reaching a deal, but is preparing for all outcomes. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said Tuesday that the chance of no deal was "not negligible," and that outcome would be bad both for Britain and for the EU.

Britain Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab is in Brussels Tuesday to meet chief EU negotiator Michel Barnier for a new round of talks.

On Thursday, the U.K. government plans to publish the first in a series of technical reports outlining the effects a no-[deal](#) Brexit would have on various sectors and offering advice to businesses and the public on how to prepare.

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