Medical Xpress

UK plans medicine airlift in no-deal Brexit

August 23 2018

Britain is preparing to airlift in medicines with a short shelf life if London cannot strike a Brexit deal with the EU, the government said Thursday.

London has plans to ensure a continued supply of medicines from the moment Britain leaves the European Union at the end of March, Health Secretary Matt Hancock said in an open letter.

It comes after NHS Providers, the group representing hospitals and ambulance services in England, warned Monday that a lack of contingency planning for a no-deal Brexit would be a risk to services.

Without national planning and coordination, "there could be both stockpiles and shortages of medicines and medical devices", said NHS Providers chief executive Chris Hopson, in a letter seen by the BBC.

Hancock's letter, spelled out what England's health system needed to consider in preparation for a no-deal Brexit.

"We will ensure the UK has an additional six weeks supply of medicines in case imports from the EU through certain routes are affected," he said.

Britain already keeps a three-month stockpile of medicines.

"Pharmaceutical companies should ensure therefore they have an additional six week supply of medicines in the UK on top of their own

normal stock levels," said Hancock.

"The scheme also includes separate arrangements for the air freight of medicines with short shelf-lives, such as medical radioisotopes," he said.

The letter said hospitals, doctors and pharmacies and patients would not need to stockpile additional medicines, or doctors to write longer prescriptions.

"The government has plans in place to ensure a continued supply of medicines to patients from the moment we leave the EU."

Britain on Thursday outlined wider plans for managing the fallout in the "unlikely" scenario of Brexit talks collapsing, warning that businesses faced more customs red tape and consumers risked higher card payment charges.

Brexit Minister Dominic Raab also said Britain would adopt a series of EU rules in case of a no-deal to allow EU imports in and urged Brussels to do the same for British goods.

Raab said Britain would continue to recognise batch testing and EU certifications for medicine to avoid disruption.

© 2018 AFP

Citation: UK plans medicine airlift in no-deal Brexit (2018, August 23) retrieved 23 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-uk-medicine-airlift-no-deal-brexit.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.