GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Ministry of Health Strengthening Asthma Care With Utilization Review

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The Ministry of Health and Social Development is strengthening the delivery of asthma care with the implementation of a Medication Utilization Review.

The Ministry has partnered with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, Pooled Procurement Service (OECS/PPS) to conduct the review and they will also be responsible for analyzing the data.

A Medication Utilization Review (MUR), also referred to as a Drug Utilization Review (DUR), is a structured and ongoing quality improvement process conducted by healthcare professionals to ensure that medications are used appropriately, safely, and effectively.

Healthcare professionals across the Territory are being encouraged to actively participate in this critical process. Chief of Drugs and Pharmaceuticals, Mrs. Gracia Wheatley-Smith said that participation in a MUR is not only a professional responsibility, but also a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the advancement of pharmaceutical care. “Through the collection and analysis of data, healthcare providers are able to assess whether current treatment protocols are achieving the desired outcomes for patients,” Mrs. Wheatley-Smith disclosed.

According to the Chief of Drugs, the Ministry of Health is seeking to have the waist circumference measured by the doctors and recorded on the prescriptions. The latest studies have shown that there is an association with waist circumference and adult asthma attacks. The Pharmacist will then be responsible for further data management.

“The data collected by pharmacists plays a central role in this process. By evaluating prescribing trends and comparing them with internationally established guidelines, healthcare professionals can determine whether current practices are both therapeutic and effective. Where necessary, targeted interventions can be implemented to bridge gaps and enhance the quality of care delivered to patients across the Virgin Islands,” Mrs. Wheatley-Smith explained.

Where gaps or inefficiencies are identified, evidence-based recommendations can be made to improve prescribing practices and treatment approaches. These adjustments have the potential to extend beyond local impact, contributing to

regional and even international improvements in medication use and patient care standards.

Following the completion of data analysis, findings and recommendations will be formally presented to healthcare professionals through a dedicated workshop. This forum will serve as a platform to share insights, discuss outcomes, and guide the implementation of any recommended changes in prescribing practices.

“This initiative reflects the Ministry’s ongoing commitment to strengthening healthcare systems through collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and continuous improvement. By participating in Medication Utilization Reviews, healthcare professionals across the Virgin Islands are playing a direct role in shaping safer, more effective, and globally aligned standards of care,” Mrs. Wheatley-Smith concluded.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development remains committed to protecting and promoting the health and social well-being of the people of the Virgin Islands through effective policies, sustainable programmes, and strategic partnerships that support a safe, healthy, and resilient society.

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