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To:

Directors of Nursing, NHS Boards  
Medical Directors, NHS Boards  
Divisional Directors Laboratory Services  
Board Medical Physics Leads  
Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service  
Primary Care Leads  
NHS Procurement Management SMT Leads

Copied:

Academy of Medical Royal colleges and Faculties  
in Scotland  
Chairs of SAMD and SEND  
Board Resilience Leads  
Incident Reporting and Investigation Centre,  
Health Facilities Scotland  
Chief Executive National Services Scotland  
Chief Executive Healthcare Improvement  
Scotland  
Scottish Independent Hospitals Association

20 August 2021

Dear Colleague

## **URGENT Supply Disruption of BD Vacutainer Blood Specimen Collection Tubes**

As you will be aware, Becton Dickinson (BD) advised a global supply disruption to the supply of four blood collection products, including three types of blood collection tubes used extensively across NHS Scotland. BD have reported the cause of this disruption is due to a combination of factors including increased global demand (driven by COVID) and the re-establishment of elective services.

While current stock levels in the National Distribution Centre are continuing to meet business as usual demand from NHS Boards, to respond to this, Scottish Government professional leads, NHS Scotland clinical leads and National Services Scotland have been working rapidly to put in place measures to alleviate any possible disruption to supply.

The enclosed Guidance "*Recommended Actions to optimise diagnostic testing during blood tube shortages*" is for use by NHS Scotland Boards, with separate guidance issued by NHS England. The Guidance has been developed by the NHS Scotland Clinical and Technical Reference Group (CTAG) with input from Scottish services, laboratory professionals, diagnostics networks, the Scottish Demand Optimisation Group and the Academy of Royal Colleges. Based on Realistic Medicine principles including our commitment to reduce waste



and plastics, this is to ensure demand optimisation and build on best practice in diagnostic test use.

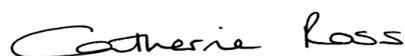
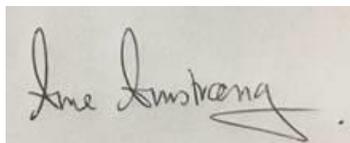
A four country response to this issue has also been initiated with direct engagement with BD both at UK level and with National Services Scotland. Support is being provided to NHS Scotland through the National Supply Disruption Response System (NSDR) and mutual aid considered as necessary.

As the situation on supply remains ongoing, communication requests on supply issues should continue to be directed to the National Distribution Centre (NDC) as the NHS Scotland procurement is managed via National Procurement, with ordering direct from BD and distribution to the health Boards through the NDC who have set up a thrice weekly meeting with health boards.

Should it be necessary, any further updates to the guidance will be developed with health boards and shared through this process.

Thank you for your support as the remobilisation and sustainability of our services continues.

Yours sincerely



Dr Gregor Smith  
Chief Medical Officer

Anne Armstrong  
Deputy Chief Nursing Officer Designate

Catherine Ross  
Chief Healthcare Science Officer