



Pharmaceutical Services, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast BT2 8DQ  
Telephone No. 028 95 363364

To: All Community Pharmacists

24<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Dear colleague

Please be aware that there is an important drug supply issue affecting **Capsaicin (Axsain) 0.075% cream / Capsaicin (Zacin) 0.025% cream**:

- Teva, the sole supplier of capsaicin cream, have informed the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) that due to manufacturing delays, both products will be out of stock until at least November 2019.

**Action required:**

- For patients who do not have sufficient supplies of capsaicin cream for the duration of the expected out of stock period, **clinicians should consider prescribing an unlicensed preparation** of capsaicin cream as soon as possible.
  - DHSC have contacted specialist importer companies, who have advised that unlicensed imports of both strength capsaicin creams can be sourced from abroad. Importers who have currently confirmed they can source these lines, include:

Capsaicin 0.025%/0.075% cream	Alium Medical
	Ennogen
	Mawdsley's
	Durbin PLC
	WEP Clinical

- Clinicians will need to work with local pharmacies to understand more about the specific unlicensed products that can be sourced and associated lead times.



Pharmaceutical Services, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast BT2 8DQ  
Telephone No. 028 95 363364

- Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant guidance and NHS Trust or local governance procedures. Please see the links below for further information:

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/prescribing-and-managing-medicines-and-devices/prescribing-unlicensed-medicines>

-

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/373505/The supply of unlicensed medicinal products specials .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/373505/The_supply_of_unlicensed_medicinal_products_specials.pdf)

<https://www.rpharms.com/Portals/0/RPS%20document%20library/Open%20access/Support/toolkit/specials-professional-guidance.pdf>

- In order for pharmacies to dispense an unlicensed drug, prescriptions must indicate that a special is required/prescribed by the GP. This could include the GP annotating the prescription with the following wording: "special order".
- To minimise the disruption this may cause locally in terms of patients seeking GP appointments, GP practices may want to consider using local IT systems to identify patients who may be impacted by this shortage and to manage these patients by prescribing unlicensed supplies or alternative agents, where appropriate.
- For patients **in whom unlicensed supplies are not considered appropriate**, clinicians should refer to the UKMI memo for advice on alternatives: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/shortage-of-capsaicin-cream-zacin-and-axsain/>

If you have any queries, please contact [DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk)