

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 85/2007

30 August 2007

The Opposition has received representations from the family of a patient with Motor Neuron Disease who has been subjected to considerable stress as a result of a policy decision by the Government that affects the supply of medication to the patient.

The Opposition considers that this is totally unacceptable and the policy should be reversed to ensure peace of mind to the patient and the relatives. They must be guaranteed that the required medication will be available and supplied.

The patient in question was prescribed in September 2005, the only drug on the market that is capable of improving the quality of life of the patient and retarding the progression of the illness. This medication is supplied on a monthly prescription for life. Between January 2006 and April 2007 the medication was supplied by prescription from the patients GP at the Health Centre. However the family was subsequently informed by the pharmacist that the drug had to be prescribed by a consultant because the Government would not pay for it if the prescription was signed by a GP.

The Opposition believes that this policy makes no sense whatsoever. The medication in question is only relevant to control the progression of this particular condition of which there are very few cases in Gibraltar.

Since then the relatives has been faced with the stressful situation of having to chase between the Consultant, the GP and the Pharmacist to ensure the regular supply of the medication.

This medication costs about £50 per week and the Health Service cost over £1 million a week. So the Government should put the welfare of the patients and their carers at the top of the list and not allow beaurocratic wrangles to put further pressure on people who already are under a lot of pressure and going through a very difficult time.

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