

Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Department of Health & Social Care
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries Unit
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

September 11th 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Home Blood Pressure Monitors Should be Available on Prescription

Blood Pressure UK, the only UK charity dedicated to lowering the nation's blood pressure to prevent stroke and heart disease, request that home blood pressure monitors be made available on prescription¹. This 'game changer', which takes advantage of the recent technological advances in blood pressure, will take the pressure off the NHS and save lives, particularly amongst the elderly and the socially deprived.

At a time when access to overwhelmed GPs and other healthcare professionals is restricted during the pandemic, making home blood pressure monitors available to anyone eligible for free prescriptions, who has been diagnosed with high blood pressure, is an effective and cost-effective measure in getting the nation's blood pressure under control².

Home monitoring is strongly recommended by NICE³. Blood pressure readings can then be submitted to the surgery by text, email or over the phone. The NHS already provides glucose monitors on prescription to patients living with diabetes to measure their blood sugar and help reduce the adverse effects of the condition. A similar approach should be taken for those most at risk of high blood pressure, helping ensure that those with high readings are prescribed appropriate medication and will be more motivated to adjust their lifestyle habits.

High blood pressure already costs the NHS over £2.1 billion⁴ every year yet 6.5 million⁵ people remain undiagnosed. According to ONS data, just in the last two months the number of deaths in those under 65 caused by high blood pressure is up by one third⁶. It is vital that we identify those with high blood pressure and help them bring it under control now.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you at your soonest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Graham MacGregor CBE

Chairman



Katharine Jenner

Chief Executive

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/sep/07/prescribe-blood-pressure-monitors-to-reduce-stroke-uk-charity-says>

² [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)30309-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30309-X/fulltext)

³ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng136/chapter/recommendations>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-combating-high-blood-pressure/health-matters-combating-high-blood-pressure#:~:text=PHE%20's%20One%20You%20campaign,risk%20of%20high%20blood%20pressure>

⁵ Using the 16 million figure from PHE for England this has been extrapolated to give a figure of 19 million for the UK.

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregisteredweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/weekending14august2020>

About Blood Pressure UK

Blood Pressure UK is the UK's leading blood pressure charity working to lower the nation's blood pressure to prevent disability and death from stroke and heart disease. The charity provides information and support for people with high blood pressure and raises awareness to prevent the condition.

Blood Pressure UK is the operating name of the Blood Pressure Association, charity reg. 1058944.

Facts about blood pressure from Blood Pressure UK:

- High blood pressure has no obvious signs or symptoms. The only way to find out if you have the condition is to have a blood pressure check.
- Untreated high blood pressure is the major risk factor for strokes, heart attacks and heart failure. It is also a major risk factor for kidney disease and dementia.
- A healthy blood pressure is a level of 120/80mmHg or less.
- A blood pressure of 121/81mmHg to 139/89mmHg is on the high side and lifestyle changes such as eating less salt, more fruit and veg and losing weight if necessary should be advised.
- If readings are consistently at or above 140/90mmHg, high blood pressure is diagnosed, and action should be taken to lower it by leading a healthier lifestyle, and, if necessary, by taking medication as directed by your doctor