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MINISTRY OF HEALTH, WELLNESS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Ministerial Building

Kingstown

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 28, 2019

Contact: Permanent Secretary
Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Recall of Angiotensin II Receptor Blocker Medicines

The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), along with several specific drug manufacturers, have recalled a number of batches of drugs called Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARB). This is due to the detection of impurities originating from the manufacturing process of the products. These medicines are used primarily to treat hypertension and include Valsartan, Losartan and Irbesartan. While all categories of these drugs are available in the private sector, only Losartan is provided to clients attending government health facilities.

The Government Pharmaceutical Services in the Ministry of Health, Wellness and Environment and the St Vincent and the Grenadines Pharmacy Council are charged with overall responsibility for assuring the safety of medicines used in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These entities wish to assure the public that they have been constantly monitoring the situation and investigations show that none of the batches of drugs affected and recalled were identified to be in circulation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

While not all batches of (ARB's) medicines are affected, there is a resulting shortage of these medicines on the global market which may eventually affect the supply at local pharmacies. Patients should note that not all medications that are used to treat hypertension are affected by the recall.

Therefore, patients are advised to:

- Continue taking their medications unless otherwise directed by their physician.
- Check their stock of medicines and contact any pharmacist for clarification if in doubt as to whether their medicines are affected by the recall.
- Report any adverse reactions experienced while taking these types of medicines to a pharmacist or other health care provider.
- Check with their doctor to explore alternate treatment options if necessary.

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The Pharmaceutical Services/Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment is conducting ongoing investigations to monitor the situation and to identify any further development. **Additional enquiries regarding this drug recall can be directed to the office of the Chief Pharmacist, Environmental Health Building; telephone: 485-6994.**

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