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**9 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding charges for hospital prescriptions issued by the Accident And Emergency Department, when filed outside the hospital at local pharmacies: [OQ.7/2019]**

Will the Minister advise the Assembly whether hospital prescriptions issued by the Accident and Emergency Department when it falls outside the hospital and local pharmacies due to the hospital pharmacy being closed, are treated as private prescriptions and incur a charge? If so, will the Minister explain why, given that G.P. prescription items are free of charge?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

I am informed it would be very rare for a prescription from the Emergency Department to be dispensed outside of the hospital. Any urgent medicines required by patients following an Emergency Department attendance will be supplied directly from the department at that time. If patients are given a prescription to take away it will be for a non-urgent medicine, which does not need to be dispensed until the hospital pharmacy is next open. Any hospital prescription presented to a community pharmacy for dispensing will be treated as a private prescription by the community pharmacy. This is because community pharmacies are only reimbursed by Social Security for medicines they dispense, against a Health Insurance Fund prescription issued by a registered G.P.

**3.9.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:**

Yes, an emergency prescription - would that be antibiotics? Because if somebody is given antibiotics at the weekend it is imperative they start the course fairly soon and so, obviously, they would have to go and fill the prescription themselves at cost. If a single mother with a child, who obviously did not have a great deal of money available, was in that position it would be costly and they may have to defer obtaining the antibiotics until the Monday. Would it be possible for the Minister to consider extending the opening hours of the hospital pharmacy past its current closing time of 12.30 p.m. on a Saturday?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

My understanding is that urgent medicines required by patients attending the Emergency Department are not given by prescription for the patient then to go and get that prescription dispensed; the medicines are issued by the department. If it is antibiotics being required and the department considers they should be taken straightaway, those antibiotics would be given to the patient attending. If the patients are given a prescription it is because it is a non-urgent medicine that does not need to be dispensed until the hospital pharmacy is next open. The pharmacy is open on all week days between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. and on weekend mornings.