

MEDIA STATEMENT

DATE: 12th June 2017

PAGB response to investigation regarding the use of paraffin based emollients

In response to BBC's on-going investigation of fire risks associated with paraffin based emollient skin creams, John Smith, PAGB Chief Executive, comments: "We are deeply saddened to hear about these particular cases and offer our condolences to the families concerned.

"The current guidance on the use of emollients issued by the MHRA, the British National Formulary and the former National Patient Safety Agency is based on specific fire risk tests conducted by the Health & Safety Executive. The guidance seeks to ensure healthcare workers exercise caution in the specific situation where they are applying significant volumes of emollients to patients that are permitted to smoke or who may be near to a naked flame. Other risks are seen to be far higher, such as ensuring bedding and clothing is washed regularly to remove any build-up of residue.

"Significant volumes here are amounts of 100 grammes or more, an amount which implies treatment in professional care settings and not in the home by people treating common levels of eczema and other dry skin conditions. We therefore want to reassure people that the normal use of emollients in the home is considered appropriately safe provided the products are used in accordance with the on-pack instructions and accompanying patient information leaflet.

"Manufacturers of emollients are not at present required by regulation or statute to include fire safety warnings on packaging. Safety is nonetheless of paramount importance to the OTC medicines industry. In the light of this investigation, PAGB is looking to explore this issue further with the member companies and relevant bodies to see if in future, safety warnings should be added to on-pack labelling for all paraffin based emollients as standard practice across the industry, a step which some manufacturers have already taken."



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Notes to editors:

PAGB (Proprietary Association of Great Britain) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of branded over-the-counter medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements.

For further information, please contact Pegasus: Lauren Jones or Amy Simmons
01273 712000 / PAGB@thisispegasus.co.uk

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