



## **PRESS RELEASE**

No: 746/2019

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019

### **Independent Prescribing for Nurses**

Six first-level Registered Nurses from across the GHA have successfully completed, and met, the standards to become Independent Prescribers. The course was run in conjunction with St Georges University of London/Kingston University and the School of Health Studies. Introduced by Government, this is the first time that such a programme has been run in Gibraltar. Independent Prescribers are Registered Nurses who, after attaining an advanced qualification in prescribing, are legally permitted to prescribe medicines, dressings and appliances.

Dr Ron Coram, Principal of the School of Health Studies, thanked Minister for Health, Care and Justice Neil Costa, Director of Nursing Mrs Sandie Gracia, Clinical Nurse Manager Mrs Fiona McCoubrey, and Head of the School of Health Studies Professor Ian Peate for their input in enabling this innovation to come to fruition. Independent Prescribing for Nurses will transform the manner in which prescribing will be conducted in Gibraltar.

This year-long course has required these nurses to demonstrate much commitment, an ability to study at a higher level, and to be able to validate competence and confidence in assessing patients and prescribing to meet their needs. The Minister for Health, Care and Justice added that the safe and effective use of medicines ensures that our patients will receive the maximum clinical benefit. The ultimate goal of safe and effective medicines management is to optimise the benefits that treatment offers and reach the best outcome for each patient. Independent Prescribing for Nurses is another way in which the GHA is demonstrating its commitment to safe and effective care.

Mrs Sandie Gracia commented: "Independent prescribers are able to prescribe from a wide range of medicines as long as they have adequate competence to do so and their service requires it. This milestone will enable nurses to be even more responsive to patient needs, support service development, and to empower them to make full use of their clinical expertise and professional competence. The GHA have governance systems and structures in place to support and monitor non-medical prescribing to enable clinicians and clinical services to ensure safe and effective prescribing by monitoring prescribing activity and facilitating on going learning."

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice the Honourable Neil F Costa said: "I was extremely keen that the School of Health Studies delivered this course, and I was delighted when we were able to commence the programme. The science and art of prescribing is a complex skill and the programme of study has been rigorous and involved a combination of taught curricula and practice-based learning. I have no doubt that our excellent nurses will rise to the continuing challenge of providing ever better patient care."