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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Regulations)*

These Regulations amend the National Health Service (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Wales) Regulations 2001 (“the principal Regulations”) which provide for the making and recovery of charges for drugs and appliances supplied under the National Health Service Act 1977.

Regulation 2 and the Schedule reduce the charge for items on prescription supplied to patients from £4.00 to £3.00. The charge for elastic stockings is reduced from £4.00 to £3.00 (from £8.00 to £6.00 per pair) and that for tights from £8.00 to £6.00. The sums prescribed for the grant of pre-payment certificates are reduced from £20.93 to £15.69 for a four month certificate and from £57.46 to £43.09 for a twelve month certificate.

Amendments made by regulations 4 and 5 make provision for the application of the charges for the provision of pharmaceutical services that are prescribed by the principal Regulations only in relation to “Welsh prescriptions”, that is to those prescriptions that are both issued and dispensed in Wales. Charges for prescriptions that are issued under equivalent arrangements having effect in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (“equivalent prescriptions”) will be applied at the rates prescribed by the National Health Service (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) Regulations 2000.

Regulation 6 removes the requirement that persons aged under 25 and persons aged 60 or over, who are exempt from paying charges under the principal Regulations by virtue of their age, and who have their date of birth set out on Welsh prescription forms, Welsh repeatable prescriptions, or their equivalents, must declare that they are exempt by reason of their age when supplied with drugs or appliances by chemists under regulation 3 of the principal Regulations or by doctors under regulation 4 of the principal Regulations.

Regulation 7 inserts a new regulation into the principal Regulations which provides that prisoners in certain prisons will not be liable to pay any charges under the principal Regulations. Prisoners will only obtain free drugs and appliances while actually in prison and therefore will not be required to prove entitlement to exemption from paying the charges. This change is as a result of the transfer of responsibility for prison health care provision from the Home Office to Local Health Boards with effect from April 2006.