

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

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18 September 2007

PSNC requests meeting with Secretary of State for Health

On 17th September 2007, PSNC wrote to Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Health, to request a meeting to discuss how better use can be made of community pharmacy after the Minister made several very positive comments about the profession.

Please find attached a copy of the original letter.

-- ENDS --

Notes for editors:

1. The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) is the body that represents community pharmacy on NHS matters and seeks to secure the best possible NHS services provided by pharmacy contractors in England and Wales.

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17 September 2007

Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

Dear Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP

On Wednesday 12th September you were widely quoted as saying that "We need to ensure there are more routes into primary care, including high street pharmacies". PSNC represents the 10,000 NHS community pharmacies in England and we agree with you. Pharmacies are very keen to play a major part in tackling many of your key priority areas. In particular we can reduce use of expensive GP resources by dealing with minor ailments and helping our population to keep healthy and avoid disease.

As you have seen by making greater use of community pharmacies, you can achieve a major change in patients' use of the NHS, so that GP time is spent with patients who need their expertise. But if pharmacies are to have a real impact in reducing NHS expenditure and improving outcomes, consistent services need to be available in pharmacies, so they can be properly promoted and so all patients can access the same level of service throughout the country.

Pharmacies offer an unparalleled resource for people to access professional healthcare advice and additional services during and outside normal working hours, at weekends and bank holidays. We can ensure speedy implementation of a nationally agreed service in a substantial number of pharmacies providing access in communities across the country.

A community pharmacy can treat a minor ailment at approximately one third of the cost of a GP consultation. National minor ailments services through pharmacies can enable the GP to concentrate on patients who need more urgent care. Pharmacies can also provide much of the care including clinical monitoring of patients with stable and long term conditions and can use their resources and accessibility to help the government to achieve priorities such as reduction in the national obesity rates.

We have proposals for how this might be achieved in a way that is consistent with government policy of transferring responsibility to local level. At present there is a real risk that the building blocks we put in place with the new pharmacy contract in 2005 will be destroyed, and I believe it is important that we meet with you in the near future to discuss our proposals.

Yours sincerely

**Sue Sharpe
Chief Executive**