

PRESS release



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PSNC REGRETS LACK OF COHERENT NATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR PANDEMIC FLU SERVICES

27 July 2009 - PSNC is calling for greater coherence in national arrangements for pharmacies and their role in tackling the influenza pandemic. Accordingly, Barbara Parsons, PSNC's Head of Pharmacy Practice said:

“England does not currently have coherent national arrangements to which pharmacists can adhere when treating patients with pandemic ‘flu. This is a regrettable situation which needs addressing so that pharmacists can plan ahead for the coming winter months and be able concentrate on assisting their patients - both those with this virus and those with other conditions. We would like to see national strategies established which define more concretely the role of community pharmacy in a ‘flu pandemic.

“Community pharmacies are an excellent alternative venue for services such as vaccination as they are located where people work and live – and indeed, many pharmacies have already stepped in to help PCTs by agreeing to act as collection points for antiviral drugs.

“Acting as an Anti Viral Collection Point can involve a substantially increased workload which will - without support - inevitably impact on other services such as treating patients with Minor Ailments or Long Term Conditions (LTCs). Greater flexibilities due to be introduced with new emergency legislation will also add to the workload. Many pharmacies are doing a great job in supplying anti-virals but pharmacists need the right to withdraw without penalty if demands become too high and adversely impact ability to provide other pharmacy services.

“Only when these issues are addressed will we have a truly national service, fully able and prepared to cope with a potential pandemic.”

Notes to Editor

1. PSNC (The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee) is the body that represents community pharmacies in England and Wales on NHS matters.