

PRESS RELEASE



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PSNC RESPONDS TO REPORT PREDICTING DRAMATIC NHS FUNDING SQUEEZE

On the 10 June, the NHS Confederation published 'Dealing with the Downturn', which claimed that 'the NHS is facing a very severe contraction in its finance with an £8-10 billion real terms cut in the three years from 2011'.

The report argued that 'the need for radical quality and efficiency improvement is greater than ever' if the Health Service is to rise to this challenge.

Commenting on the report, PSNC CEO Sue Sharpe said:

"The state of the public finances over the coming years means that the NHS now has to find ways of improving productivity and value for money while also maintaining and building on the quality of care. That's a real challenge and will require innovative, radical steps. This scenario provides a real opportunity for the NHS to use community pharmacy to improve efficiency.

We know that pharmacies can help free up GPs to deal with priority patients, and we need a nationally agreed minor ailments scheme to make that happen. By acting as a first port of call for minor ailments, community pharmacies can save GPs up to one hour a day – the equivalent of 57 million consultations a year.

We know that pharmacies can manage and maintain patients with long-term conditions, saving costs in secondary care or elsewhere in primary care. Pharmacies are the most accessible places for delivering NHS health checks. And we know that pharmacies can demonstrate real value for money by helping people manage and reduce health risks associated with obesity, smoking, alcohol and poor diet.

"99 per cent of people in England can get to a pharmacy within 20 minutes. Community pharmacies are widely accessible and trusted by patients. The NHS cannot squander this resource if it is to rise to the financial challenges of the coming years."

~Ends~

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

2. The NHS Confederation report 'Dealing with the Downturn' was published on 10 June 2009.

*For further information please contact the PSNC press office
on 0207 618 9187 or at psnc@luther.co.uk.*