

PRESS RELEASE



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MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURES CONFIRMED FOR FIRST COMMUNITY PHARMACY QUESTION TIME EVENT

15 September 2009 – Spokespeople from all three major political parties will come together on one stage to debate how best to maximise pharmacy's potential, it was announced today.

Minister for Health Services Mike O'Brien MP, Conservative Shadow Minister for Health Mark Simmonds MP, and Liberal Democrat Shadow Health Secretary Norman Lamb MP will sit on the panel at the first ever Community Pharmacy Question Time event, hosted by PSNC. The panel will be chaired by PSNC Chief Executive Sue Sharpe. The event marks the first time all three parties have fielded representatives to publicly debate pharmacy issues.

The debate will last for approximately an hour, and will take the well-known and established BBC Question Time format, with pre-submitted questions from the invited audience fielded by a distinguished panel of experts.

The event promises to be a lively and constructive debate on the services pharmacists can and should be providing, as well as the key policy questions that need to be answered as NHS pharmacy services evolve.

Sue Sharpe, PSNC Chief Executive and Chair of the debate's panel, said:

"PSNC is excited to be hosting this important event. With a general election on the horizon, the promotion of public health at the top of the national agenda, and the need to find affordable ways of delivering accessible, high quality patient care becoming ever more pressing, community pharmacy should be at the centre of all parties' plans for the NHS.

"There are serious questions, however, about how pharmacy's potential can be effectively harnessed. What should the next steps be in transforming local pharmacies into healthy living centres? How can central government overcome concerns about variability in the quality of pharmacy service commissioning? How can pharmacy contractors be assured that new services will be effectively recognised and rewarded? How do we ensure issues like dispensing errors and medicine stock shortages do not continue to be barriers to progress?

"It is reassuring that all three major parties have shown such willingness to engage with us on such crucial policy questions. PSNC's first Community Pharmacy Question Time promises to be an unprecedented opportunity to assess the major parties' policies and

positions in this area, and provide unparalleled insight into the future for community pharmacy.”

The debate will be held at London’s Commonwealth Club on the morning of the 25th November from 10 – 11am.

~Ends~

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

Notes to Editor

1. PSNC (The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee) is the body that represents community pharmacies in England and Wales on NHS matters.
2. The Commonwealth Club is located at 25 Northumberland Avenue, WC2N 5AP, and is a few minutes’ walk from the Houses of Parliament. More information can be found at <http://www.thecommonwealthclub.co.uk/>.
3. Media representatives interested in attending should contact the PSNC press office: [0207 618 9187 or at psnc@luther.co.uk].