

**PRESS RELEASE**



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**‘PHARMACY FIRST’ PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN –  
PAGB AND PSNC SUPPORT MPs’ CALL FOR ACTION**

Following the All Party Parliamentary Group on Primary Care and Public Health Group’s recent inquiry into GP access, PSNC and PAGB call for a ‘Pharmacy First’ public awareness campaign to highlight the advice provided by pharmacists and to encourage the public to use pharmacy as a first port of call for minor ailments.

Community pharmacies offer convenience and accessibility by virtue of their high street locations and long opening hours. Pharmacists already offer a wide variety of services in addition to dispensing of prescriptions, including Medicine Use Reviews, advice on leading healthier lifestyles and checks for diabetes and cholesterol. The government’s recent White Paper has recognised the strength of pharmacy, and contains proposals to extend pharmacy services further, for example, increasing the availability of NHS minor ailments services.

Commenting on the APPG report, PSNC’s chief executive, Sue Sharpe said:

“PSNC agrees with MPs that public information campaigns are needed to encourage patients to optimise their use of NHS healthcare services. Patients should be encouraged to think ‘Pharmacy First’ when seeking advice for minor ailments such as colds or headaches. This will save both GPs’ and patients’ time as pharmacies offer the advantage that no appointment is required – patients can just drop in at a time convenient to them and get advice on their condition quickly and safely.

“Of course, if the problem is more serious, they will be referred to the GP or hospital as appropriate, but for the vast majority, pharmacies provide a quick and convenient way to seek advice on minor health issues.

“The pharmacy profession is happy to work with PAGB and the DH to help manage this highly important campaign.”

Gopa Mitra, PAGB Health Policy and Public Affairs Director, added:

“Our long held belief that the self care and self medication of minor ailments helps people to be independent in their actions, less dependent on the GP, is reflected in the

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on 0207 618 9187 or at [psnc@luther.co.uk](mailto:psnc@luther.co.uk).*

very sensible recommendations of this APPG Inquiry. It is clearly time to signal to the public that if they need reassurance of their symptoms not being more serious there is a highly trained expert available in every pharmacy to help them.

“Community pharmacies are the logical first port of call for patients seeking advice with minor ailments and we are proposing to work in collaboration with PSNC and DH on a collaborative communications campaign.”

For more information, please contact the PSNC press office on 0207 618 9187.

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### **Notes to Editors**

1. PSNC (The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee) is the body that represents community pharmacies in England and Wales on NHS matters.
2. PAGB is the UK trade association for manufacturers of over-the-counter medicines and food supplements.
3. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Primary Care and Public Health Group works to: raise the profile of primary care and public health within parliament; to speak within parliament on behalf of both users and those working in the NHS; to place primary care and public health high on the government's agenda; and to inform debate by parliamentarians with outside bodies.
4. An All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) is a grouping in Parliament composed of politicians from all political parties. APPGs include member of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. They have no formal place in the legislature, but are an effective way of bringing together parliamentarians and interested parties. The Proprietary Association of Great Britain (PAGB) provides administrative support to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Primary Care and Public Health.
5. For information on the new services available from community pharmacies please visit [www.psnc.org.uk/contract](http://www.psnc.org.uk/contract).

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