

PRESS RELEASE



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PSNC SUCCESSFULLY PROMOTES AMENDMENT TO HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE BILL TO ENSURE CONTINUATION OF CENTRALLY NEGOTIATED AND SECURED FUNDING

PSNC has lobbied hard to achieve an important amendment to the Health & Social Care Bill in Parliament. The amendment places a requirement on the Secretary of State to continue to determine the fees and allowances for the national elements of the community pharmacy contractual framework, in negotiation with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee and in discussion with the NHS.

PSNC's CEO, Sue Sharpe, said:

"We have been working hard as the Bill has gone through the Commons and the Lords to highlight our concern. Under the Bill as originally presented to Parliament, centrally negotiated and secured funding for community pharmacy services in England could have disappeared on a whim. This was not the Government's intention – indeed, Ministers have said on the record in the House that they're committed to retaining it - but the drafting of the Bill made it possible for it be removed in future with no change to regulations. That was unacceptable to us. The amendment to the Bill that Ministers have introduced under pressure from us and from a range of parliamentarians will safeguard against that happening. It is good news for community pharmacy and for patients.

"Centrally agreed funding is vital because it provides stability and certainty for contractors as they plan and develop services. That is all the more important given the proposals in the pharmacy white paper and the recent primary care strategy.

"We are grateful to all the parliamentarians who supported our case from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, as well as independents."

-Ends-

Notes to Editors

1. The issue was debated at the Commons Committee Stage of the Health & Social Care Bill, and at Lords Committee Stage, Report Stage and Third Reading of the Bill. The Government accepted the case for change and introduced its own amendment to

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address PSNC's concern at Lords Third Reading on 1 July 2008. The amendment was accepted by the House without a vote.

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

3. For information on the new services available from community pharmacies please visit www.psnco.org.uk/contract.

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