



PRESS RELEASE

03 March 2008

Pharmacy Bodies Respond to Flu Pandemic Consultation

The PSNC, CCA, NPA, RPSGB, AIMp and CPW have jointly responded to the Department of Health's (DH) consultation on Surge Capacity and Prioritisation in Health Services in the event of an influenza pandemic.

Community pharmacy will bear the brunt of expectation and demand from the large numbers of patients who will require additional care and treatment within primary care in a pandemic, as well as needing to maintain services to all existing patients, in particular attempting continuity of care for those with long term conditions.

The response identifies ways to increase capacity through increased self care; a national minor ailments service, and full utilisation of repeat dispensing. The pharmacy bodies highlight use of the pharmacy channel to promote pandemic related information and health messages.

It discusses the impact on the pharmacy workforce during a pandemic, how the role of the pharmacy team might need to change; and how community pharmacy may be affected by staff, stock and fuel shortages.

The bodies all agree that communication will be crucial and community pharmacy needs to be included in PCO planning. This will ensure that all community pharmacy contractors and staff are fully aware of planned local operational responses and are able to trigger reconfiguration of pharmacy services to manage increased demand and implement emergency practice enabled by proposed legislative changes, agreed to come into place during a pandemic situation.

The pharmacy response details how community pharmacy should integrate into a whole health system response to ensure that it plays its full part and to ensure that patients continue to receive high quality pharmaceutical care.

The national pharmacy bodies are continuing to work closely with the DH on different aspects of planning for an influenza pandemic and have already published service continuity plans, which lay the foundation for surge capacity and service prioritisation planning.

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Notes for editors:

The Association of Independent Multiples (AIMp) has over 1200 pharmacies in membership and represents the interests of the independent multiple sector. Its members have between 5 to 300 shops, and include: Day Lewis plc, HI Weldrick Ltd and PCT Healthcare.

The Company Chemists Association (CCA) provides a forum for the major businesses engaged in community pharmacy to work together to help create an environment where community pharmacy can flourish, and where pharmacy contractors compete in a fair and equitable way. The CCA's nine member companies are: Alliance Boots, Co-operative Group Pharmacy, LloydsPharmacy, Tesco, J Sainsbury, Wm Morrison Supermarkets, Asda Wal-Mart, Rowlands Pharmacy and Superdrug. Between them they own over 5,000 pharmacies, representing around 45% of the pharmacies in the United Kingdom.

The National Pharmacy Association (NPA) was established in 1921 as the trade association of community pharmacy owners and has virtually all pharmacy owners in the UK in voluntary membership. To reflect the changes in the pharmacy environment the NPA now extends membership and its associated benefits to all members of the community pharmacy infrastructure.

The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) is recognised by the Secretary of State for Health as representative of community pharmacy on NHS matters. PSNC's main objective is to secure the best possible remuneration, terms and conditions for NHS pharmacy contractors in England and Wales. Much of the PSNC's work involves discussions and negotiations with the Department of Health.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) is the professional and regulatory body for pharmacists in England, Scotland and Wales. It also regulates pharmacy technicians on a voluntary basis, which is expected to become statutory under anticipated legislation. The primary objectives of the Society are to lead, regulate, develop and represent the profession of pharmacy.

Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) is the body that represents community pharmacy on NHS matters and seeks to secure the best possible NHS services provided by pharmacy contractors in Wales. It is the body recognised by the Welsh Assembly Government in accordance with ss 83 and 85 National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 as representative of persons providing pharmaceutical services.

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