

PRESS RELEASE



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**PSNC RESPONDS TO NIGEL PRAITIES'S
RECENT ARTICLE IN PULSE MAGAZINE**

PSNC chief executive, Sue Sharpe has responded to an article in the most recent edition of Pulse. The text of her letter to the editor is below.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR, PULSE

Dear Ms. Haynes,

Nigel Praities's article (*Millions from GPs' drugs budget to go to pharmacists*, 4 June 2008) is one-sided and alarmist.

The government's White Paper, *Pharmacy in England – building on strengths, delivering the future*, describes how the resources of community pharmacy could be used to provide patients with better access to a wider range of health and well-being services in their community. It is based on local examples of best practice that are already working well. If the NHS is to manage capacity issues effectively, and meet the public's expectations of primary care, new and better ways must be found to use resources, not just in some parts of the country, but in all. Far from being a threat to GPs, pharmacy services such as those in the White Paper can be part of the solution to capacity problems in general practice. I would have thought the potential benefits to GPs of a pharmacy minor ailments service, for example, are self-evident.

More importantly, service developments in primary care should be driven by the interests of patients, not the self-interest of GPs and pharmacists. The pharmacy services we wish to see, many of which are articulated in the White Paper, will improve access, convenience and choice for patients. We are not seeking competition between pharmacists and GPs, nor do we want or expect patients to be compelled to see a pharmacist rather than their GP. Indeed, it may be that some patients choose to visit their GPs to obtain advice or treatment for a minor ailment, for example, or for advice on sexual health or weight management, and so on. Some may question whether that represents the best use of resources, but no one, in pharmacy at least, is suggesting that those patients be forced to do otherwise.

It is in the public's interest to encourage more and better collaboration between pharmacy and general practice. For our part, we are keen to work in

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collaboration, not in competition, with GPs and their representatives, to deliver services that are good for patients.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Sharpe, CEO, PSNC

-Ends-

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. For information on the new services available from community pharmacies please visit www.psnco.org.uk/contract.
3. An overview of the adjournment debate can be found by visiting: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080519/debtext/80519-0021.htm#080520100002>

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