

Press Release



20 October 2003

LET THE *VISION* BE A SPRINGBOARD TO BETTER HEALTHCARE VIA THE NHS

The National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA) has submitted a detailed response to the Department of Health's consultation *A Vision for Pharmacy in the new NHS*.

The NPA Board endorses the overall aim of the document – to ensure that pharmacy as a whole becomes a fully integral component of the developing NHS – and welcomes the Government's acknowledgement that community pharmacy represents a significant untapped resource for improving health. The Board hopes that the vision will be a springboard for many improvements tangible to patients and the wider public.

The Board does, however, voice some concerns on behalf of its members but points raised in its submission are intended to be constructive and supportive. The NPA's role as representative of the majority of community pharmacy owners in the UK demands that it takes a pragmatic perspective. The *Vision* outlines considerable changes, so for its proposals to become a reality it is important that they are both practicable and perceived to be so.

The NPA Board raises five main points:

1. The Government must consider its *Vision* for the future of community pharmacy in the NHS, alongside the other contemporary issues that will have a significant effect on the sector – such as the Generics Inquiry and forthcoming changes to the Control of Entry Regulations.
2. The *Vision* outlines considerable changes, affecting community pharmacy particularly. Successful implementation will require that community pharmacy is in a position to embrace these changes and the NPA can play a key role in the change management process by providing its members with the necessary resource and support.
3. Two of the proposed initiatives may be mutually antagonistic. The Board firmly supports the proposal to seek to ensure that community pharmacy is better recognised by all stakeholders, but it is concerned that permitting NHS professional services to continue to be provided from community pharmacies in the absence of a pharmacist could be a barrier to achieving the recognition intended.
4. The Board has misgivings about the conclusion that, if some community pharmacies focus on the provision of highly efficient dispensing services, they will relieve other pharmacies of dispensing workloads. Assuming that pharmacists' remuneration will still be linked to dispensing it is hard to see how this conclusion can be drawn. Moreover, experience suggests that dispensing workload is related to one main factor – location.
5. There is also cause for concern at the significant absence of detail or policy statement concerning the need for a robust IT infrastructure to support the implementation of the *Vision*, together with lack of detailed information on the access community pharmacists will

have to those parts of patient records that they will have to consider if the best possible quality of service is to be provided.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. The National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA) is the association that represents the professional and commercial interests of the owners of around 11,000 community pharmacies in the United Kingdom.
2. To see the full response, [click here](#).
3. For more information, please contact the NPA Press Office on: 01727 858687, ext. 3227, 3265 or 3311 or email: press.office@npa.co.uk