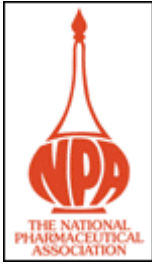


## Press Release



17<sup>th</sup> May 2004

### NPA COMMENT ON THE NEW PHARMACY CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

The NPA is disappointed and frustrated to learn that the Department of Health's opening offer was wholly unrealistic. The Association's view is that pharmacy contractors have shown great commitment to an increased healthcare role, and have already given overwhelming support to a new contractual framework to support this.

Pharmacy contractors have been led to believe through a number of statements from the Department of Health that the contract would be properly funded. Most recently, in an exclusive interview in *Chemist & Druggist*, Health Minister, Rosie Winterton, said that she was "committed to fully funding the new pharmacy contract to make it work".

If contractors are to get behind the new contract – and if it is to work to best effect in enhancing services to patients within local communities – it must be fully funded.

NPA Chairman, Ash Soni, commented: "It would appear that the Government is walking away from their stated commitment. This is a totally unacceptable state of affairs, which will send out mixed messages to both contractors and their representatives. What is clear and irrefutable is that pharmacy is ready, willing and able to implement and deliver the new services within the contract, but Ministers and the Department of Health civil servants need to recognise that we need to be fully rewarded. We are awaiting that assurance."

**Ends**

**Notes to Editors**

1. The NPA is the association which represents the professional and commercial interests of the owners of some 11,000 community pharmacies
2. For further information, please contact the NPA Press Office on: 01727-858687, ext 3340, 3227, 3311 or 3229