

Press Release



NPA PRESS RELEASE

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NPA RESPONSE TO NHS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The NPA welcomes the overriding objective of the NHS Improvement Plan to improve patient care – and is encouraged that there is a strong focus placed on developing traditional primary care services. The Improvement Plan identifies the 5 areas that patients have highlighted as being of greatest importance: access and waiting; well-coordinated care; better information and more choice; even better relationships between patients and staff and clean, friendly and comfortable environments. All areas where community pharmacy scores well, according to NPA Chief Executive, John D’Arcy, who comments: “Based on these criteria, we believe community pharmacy is well positioned to take on a more integrated role in primary care – and the new pharmacy contract will facilitate this.”

The Association is particularly pleased to see pharmacy feature so prominently, with extensive reference to the myriad ways in which the profession can improve the health and wellbeing of local communities. These include minor ailments schemes and repeat dispensing. The Plan’s stated commitment to ease bureaucracy on repeat dispensing will ensure that pharmacy is at the centre of this process. The NPA also welcomes the commitment that pharmacy can work alongside other healthcare professionals toward improving health and reducing health inequalities.

However, the Association does have concerns that service planning could be impeded by the Government's decision to introduce the 'balanced package of measures' for control of entry. John D'Arcy, NPA Chief Executive, explained: "We believe that pharmacy services are part of the overall services that need to be planned – and improving patient choice by opening up the market may well serve to frustrate PCTs' ability to commission services. We would suggest that a strategy on integrating services across primary care would have enabled better co-ordination of patient care and also provided clear direction to PCTs."

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 3265