

Press Release



16 May 2003

OFT PHARMACY REPORT: CAMPAIGNING CONTINUES IN ENGLAND!

The National Pharmaceutical Association has written to its members in England, encouraging them to maintain the momentum of their local lobbying activities to patients, the press and Parliamentarians; with a renewed message of *'local problems require local solutions'*. In particular, the NPA is urging pharmacists to write again to their local MP, warning that if the Government's proposed 'balanced package of measures' involve anything other than a 'flexing' of the current Control of Entry regulations, it will not be in the best interests of their constituents, or in the development of local community pharmacy services.

While the Association firmly supports greater flexibility at local level to ensure pharmacy service planning secures the highest possible levels of access, quality and choice, it is concerned that the proposed measures may go much further than this and, in effect, lead to deregulation by the back door. In his letter and accompanying lobbying brief, NPA Chief Executive, John D'Arcy, detailed this concern – and other significant discussion points for MPs to consider.

Commenting on this latest member 'call to action', Mr D'Arcy said: "In addition to our centralised influencing campaign with Ministers and policy makers, our member's hard work and commitment to lobbying MPs and the local community has ensured a groundswell of opinion in support of community pharmacies and a clear understanding of the devastating impact that deregulating pharmacy provision will have on local services for local people. Until the Government announces its proposals, before the Parliamentary summer recess, it is vital that we keep up the pressure and oppose any wholesale 'opening up' of the market. I am confident that renewed lobbying of MPs can make a significant difference in raising awareness of the current state of play and what is at risk if Ministers do not heed the concerns of pharmacists, the public, patients, and the press".

The NPA will continue its influencing campaign to ensure that Ministers and healthcare planners recognise that without a compelling and demonstrated need to alter substantially the current market dynamics, they risk possible *long-term, unintended and unforeseen negative consequences*, which will jeopardise not only local healthcare provision, but the long-term objectives of the core consumer for NHS pharmacy services: the department of Health itself!

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Notes to Editors:

1. The National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA) is the trade association that represents the professional and commercial interests of the owners of around 11,000 community pharmacies in the United Kingdom.
2. For more information, please contact the NPA Press Office on: 01727 858687, ext. 3340, 3227, 3311 or 3265.