

Pharmacy Regulator Says Much Greater Role for Pharmacists in Safe Medicine Use

Tuesday, March 3, 2009: The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI), the statutory regulator for pharmacists and pharmacies, has welcomed the recommendations in the report of the Barry review group aimed at improving appropriate and safe medicine usage.

Speaking at a PSI Council meeting in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, the PSI President Bernard Leddy said there was a much greater role for pharmacy to support improved medicine usage. "There is no doubt that we could be using medicines more effectively in this country, achieving better outcomes for patients and using our resources more efficiently," said Dr Bernard Leddy, PSI President.

"The PSI, through its Pharmacy Ireland 2020 initiative, is examining how to develop pharmacy practice and services into the future to deliver better patient care and added value services, and how this can be done by better using and integrating the valuable resources of pharmacists and pharmacies in the health service generally. A greater role for pharmacists in the management and monitoring of medicine use, including the medicine use reviews endorsed in the Barry report, is a key factor in the Pharmacy Ireland 2020 interim report which was presented to the Minister for Health and Children last year. Pharmacy services in other countries are already adding significant patient value by utilising evidence-based approaches in the reform of their services, with pharmacy seen to have increasing potential to support patient care at the lowest levels of cost and complexity."

Dr Leddy added that the Pharmacy Act 2007, the final sections of which will be commenced later this year, will provide a robust regulatory framework to allow the development of pharmacy services while protecting the safety of patients. The Pharmacy Ireland 2020 initiative also examines other services and advances in practice in other countries, including health screening programmes in pharmacies, a minor ailments scheme where certain common medicines are provided through pharmacies rather than GP surgeries, influenza vaccination clinics in pharmacies, as well as improving drug safety and medication error management.

The Barry Report recommendations, which include medicine use reviews to improve compliance and health outcomes as well as improving patient information so that patients use their medicines more effectively and cut down on wastage, were included in a report produced for the Government by the review group chaired by Dr Michael Barry. The group also considered efficient and cost-effective prescribing of drugs in the Irish healthcare setting.

The PSI Council meeting was held at the Waterford Council Chamber of the Civic Offices. There was also a formal presentation to the Mayor of Co. Waterford, Councillor, Dr Tom Higgins and the Mayor of Lismore Jan Rotte to mark the occasion after the Council meeting. It was the last sitting of the current council and the first in Co Waterford.