

Embargoed Until 2.30pm

PSI TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF PATIENT SAFETY REPORT

Thursday, February 12, 2009: The PSI (Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland) the pharmacy regulator has welcomed the report of the Commission on Patient Safety and Quality Assurance '*Building a Culture of Patient Safety*' which was officially launched today by the Minister for Health and Children.

"This is a landmark report which is of particular significance to frontline healthcare professionals such as pharmacists," said Dr Ambrose McLoughlin, Registrar and CEO of the PSI. "The implementation of the new pharmacy legislation by the PSI is supported by a formal policy position with strong emphasis on patient safety. The new registration system for pharmacies is already in place and the new professional conduct system for pharmacists will be introduced later this year. This new regulatory system will further enhance the safety and quality of patient care in pharmacies in Ireland. This report provides a solid basis to protect the interests of patients in the Irish health service and the PSI will be actively supportive of the implementation of its recommendations."

Dr McLoughlin added: "It is one of the most significant reports published for Irish patients and has a number of key recommendations that the PSI would welcome. Firstly, as a statutory regulator the PSI's focus is on patient safety and public protection. The new statutory Code of Conduct for pharmacists puts patient welfare and safety as the primary concern of a pharmacist. Healthcare professionals need to be meeting the normative needs of patients and be open in communicating with patients about their treatment and care. This openness is also essential to building systems for reporting of adverse events, such as medication errors, and more importantly learning from these incidents

Dr Ambrose McLoughlin went on to say that pharmacy and pharmacists, whether they work in industry, hospital or community, have an important role in protecting the public and improving patient safety around medication. "It's important there is an explicit commitment to researching critical incidents and learning from these, in a 'no blame' culture, and to build learnings from this into the education and continuing education of healthcare professionals such as pharmacists. Recognition of the collaborative roles that healthcare practitioners can develop and better communication between practitioners is critical to the implementation of many aspects of the report."

He continued: "Regarding the proposed licensing of clinical facilities, I believe it is important that all facilities providing services to patients are licensed and regulated – under the Pharmacy Act 2007, all pharmacies in the State are now registered and this register is publicly available on our website. Another important factor is an effective and accountable clinical management structure in all aspects of the health service, that senior clinicians are accountable and that proper supervisory structure are in place. Again under the new pharmacy legislation, every pharmacy must now have a superintendent pharmacist in overall control of the policies of the pharmacy and a supervising pharmacist in day to day control of the management of the pharmacy."

Dr Ambrose McLoughlin also said that it is imperative that cooperation between health regulators is maximised in the interests of patients, both in specific circumstances and also in developing policies, processes and procedures for various aspects of health service to ensure that patient safety is a priority.

Ends

For further information, contact:

Glen McGahern, Q4 Public Relations, 086 1940057
Kate O'Flaherty, PSI, 087 9129141

Editor's Note:

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, the Pharmacy Regulator, is the statutory body for pharmacists and pharmacies in Ireland. It acts in the public interest to regulate the profession.