



Tuesday, 23rd December 2008

Return of Minor Ailments Scheme an Early Christmas Present for Northern Ireland Public

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, the professional and regulatory body for pharmacists, has welcomed the agreement announced this morning to secure the return of the Minor Ailments Service delivered through community pharmacy.

Raymond Anderson, President of the Society, commented:

“The return of the Minor Ailments Scheme is an early Christmas present for the Northern Ireland public.

Winter is a time when all health services come under pressure as common ailments such as coughs and colds take hold. The Minor Ailment Scheme takes the strain off GP surgeries by using the skills of your local pharmacist, available on the high street without an appointment. It also ensures access to free medicine for those on low incomes which is especially important during an expensive time of year.”

The end of this dispute allows the contractors, the Department, and ourselves as the professional body, to focus again on the future of pharmacy services in Northern Ireland, such as increased pharmacy prescribing and enhanced public health roles.”

Ends

For further information please contact Mark Neale, Head of Public Affairs at the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, on 02890 267 932 or 07854 004 884
mark.neale@psni.org.uk

Notes to Editors

- 1.** The Minor Ailments Scheme was originally introduced in November 2005 to encourage patients to visit their local community pharmacy as the first point of call for a health consultation. Pharmacists can give advice and medicines for a range of winter ailments including coughs and colds helping to relieve the high demand traditionally placed upon GP surgeries over winter months
- 2.** The dispute between the Department of Health, Social Services and Patient Safety and the Pharmaceutical Contractors Committee (PCC) in relation to the continuation of the Minor Ailments Service was of a contractual nature and therefore did not involve the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, the professional and regulatory body for the pharmacy profession.
- 3.** The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland seeks to provide leadership to the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland through such means as education, good practice guidance, Continuing Professional Development and advocacy of future visions for service development.