



For Immediate Release

**Friday 5th June 2009**

## **. Northern Ireland Pharmacy Representative in Europe Urges Swedish Approach to Tackling Obesity**

Returning from a European Summit on pharmacy's role in tackling obesity, Community Pharmacist Dr. Kate McClelland has called for lessons to be learnt from a Swedish scheme that uses local pharmacists to help people lose weight.

Dr. McClelland, a Community Pharmacist in Maghaberry, represented Northern Ireland at a conference in Brussels on Friday 29th May. The summit comprised pharmacy delegates from across the EU, brought together to share best practice on obesity prevention and treatment through pharmacy.

The conference concluded that "*Sweden seems to have the best model*". Centered on individualised one-on-one support between the local pharmacist and the patient, pharmacists in Sweden take an individual through a structured course of coaching in healthy living, with a nominal fee charged to the patient to encourage adherence and sustained participation.

Dr. McClelland stated:

*"Noone should underestimate the scale of the obesity problem in Northern Ireland. Over 60% of adults here have a weight problem and as many as 1 in 5 are obese.*

*Pharmacy in Northern Ireland has pioneered schemes to prevent obesity and our European colleagues were eager to find out more about these. But Northern Ireland must also learn from successful approaches in other countries too. It is clear that Pharmacy in Sweden has much to teach us about how individuals who are overweight can be tutored to improve their lifestyles through pharmacy. This is the direction pharmacy is moving in, offering holistic health support in the heart of local communities, a solution that fits Northern Ireland's community scenario well.*

*I will now be writing to our Assembly Health Committee urging it to recommend that some of these excellent pharmacy-led schemes from Europe be put in place here."*

**ENDS**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland is the regulatory and professional body for pharmacy in Northern Ireland. Its principal objective is the protection of patient safety in the provision of pharmacy services in Northern Ireland. As the professional body it also seeks to develop the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland in the public interest.
2. Dr Kate McClelland is a community pharmacist in Maghaberry. A former President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, she was representing Northern Ireland Pharmacy at the European Summit on pharmacy and obesity. Kate is also head of the UK delegation to the PGEU (see below) and has run a number of successful schemes on obesity through her own pharmacy, including running healthy living workshops through the Building the Community Pharmacy Partnership and running a free to use weight management clinic for those seeking to lose weight. Kate is available to interview by contacting Richard Price, Policy Advisor at the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, on 028 90 326 927 or 07739 175 325 [richard.price@psni.org.uk](mailto:richard.price@psni.org.uk)
3. The Conference was organised by the Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU). PGEU's members are the national associations and professional bodies of community pharmacists in 30 European countries including EU Member States, EU candidate countries and EFTA members. <http://www.pgeu.org/>
4. Through the pioneering Building the Community Pharmacy Partnership Programme (BCPP), Northern Ireland has trialed innovative methods to prevent obesity, using pharmacists to leverage their role within the heart of local communities to deliver healthy living education and support in local schools, youth organisations, sports clubs, women's groups and workplaces. <http://www.cdh.org/bcpp>
5. The Northern Ireland Assembly Health Committee is conducting an inquiry into the effectiveness of current approaches to tackling obesity in Northern Ireland. Following the PGEU's European Conference on Pharmacy's role in combating obesity the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland will be writing to the Committee to share information on novel approaches being adopted in our partner EU countries. [http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/health/2007mandate/press/PNHSSPS02\\_08\\_09.htm](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/health/2007mandate/press/PNHSSPS02_08_09.htm)



**Dr. Kate McClelland, pictured centre in dark blue jacket, with pharmacy representatives from across Europe. Dr. McClelland was representing Northern Ireland at a pan-European summit to share best practice about pharmacy's role in combating obesity.**