



Monday 8th March 2010

### **Registrar issues reminder to Pharmacists on Medicines Trading**

The Registrar of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland has issued a reminder to all registered pharmacists of their legal and professional obligations when trading medicines for human use, and the penalties that can arise from failure to comply with these.

Following a recent decline in the value of the pound as against other currencies, there are concerns about interruptions to the supply of essential drugs posed by export of medicines. Ministers for Health in London recently convened a pan-UK summit to discuss the actions necessary to prevent such a scenario.

Speaking after the summit, Registrar Brendan Kerr said:

*“Pharmacists in Northern Ireland must operate to the law, and also comply with the Code of Ethics which clearly states they make the safety and welfare of patients their prime concern. While export of medicines is legal for those who hold an MHRA wholesale dealers’ licence, pharmacists must always remember that regulations state the licence holder ensure, within the limits of their responsibility the “appropriate and continued supply” of medicines “so that the needs of patients in the UK are covered.”*

*We therefore welcome the resolution of this week’s summit to: improve the defined duties on licence holders to ensure supplies; to place tighter controls on the granting of export licences: and, to institute a continuously updated list of medicines in danger of short supply. This will help pharmacists play their full part in ensuring the continuing integrity of the supply chain.*

*The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland will continue to work with the DHSSPS Medicines Inspectorate and the MHRA to take action against any pharmacist found to contravene regulations, and, or, has been found to place commercial interests above and beyond those of the patient.”*

## 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. It also seeks to develop the pharmacy profession in the public interest.

2. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's Code of Ethics is available here:

<http://www.psni.org.uk/documents/312/Code+of+Ethics+for+Pharmacists+in+Northern+Ireland.pdf>

3. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's Guidance to pharmacists on Trading Medicines is available here:

<http://www.psni.org.uk/documents/453/Guidance+on+Trading+Medicine+for+Human+Use.pdf>

4. More information about the Department of Health (London) summit and its outcomes are available here:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH\\_113507](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_113507)

5. The Medicines for Human Use (Manufacturing, Wholesale Dealing and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005 state:

8. —(1) The holder of a wholesale dealer's licence, insofar as that licence relates to relevant medicinal products, shall—

(b) ensure, within the limits of his responsibility as a distributor of relevant medicinal products, the appropriate and continued supply of such relevant medicinal products to pharmacies and persons who may lawfully sell such products by retail or who may lawfully supply them in circumstances corresponding to retail sale so that the needs of patients in the United Kingdom are covered;

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/SI/si2005/20052789.htm>

6. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has responsibility for inspection and enforcement under all medicines related legislation in Northern Ireland. This is assumed by the Medicines Inspection and Investigation Team within the Department (DHSSPS Medicines Inspectorate).

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/pas/pas-lie/pas-inspection-enforcement.htm>

7. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the government agency which issues and regulates licences for wholesale trading of medicines.

<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/index.htm>