



**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

**Statement on pharmacy robberies, burglaries and attacks:**

Commenting on recent reports in the *Irish News* (Monday 4 July) of an attack on the Medicare Pharmacy on the Falls Road, Belfast, Brendan Kerr, Registrar of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland said:

*"The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland is deeply concerned by the reports of robberies taking place in pharmacies, and on three particular levels:*

*Firstly, and primarily, we are worried about the enormous personal and long lasting distress that can be caused to those caught up in an attack.*

*Secondly, stolen medicines often enter an illegal supply chain. There can be serious, and sometimes fatal, consequences from individuals taking a prescription medicine which was not personally prescribed for them.*

*Thirdly, we are concerned that there could be negative impacts in terms of the accessibility of pharmacy services to patients from the measures that may be required to improve security.*

In relation to what pharmacists would like to see happen to halt the increase in attacks, Anne McAlister, Chair of the Professional Forum Board<sup>1</sup>, which conducts the Professional Body role of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, said:

*"We would like to see a greater focus from law enforcement agencies on tackling the problem of pharmacy robberies, burglaries and attacks. We are also encouraging engagement between pharmacists, the Government and the Police on what further security measures may need to be implemented. Clearly though, maintaining the accessibility of pharmacy to the public must remain a priority. We do not want to allow the actions of criminals to compromise the excellent service pharmacists give to their patients."*

**ENDS**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.psni.org.uk/professionals/professional-forum/professional-forum.php>

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland is the regulatory and professional body for pharmacists in Northern Ireland. It protects public safety in pharmacy by:
  - setting and promoting standards for pharmacists' admission to the register and for remaining on the register;
  - maintaining a publicly accessible register of pharmacists, and pharmacy premises;
  - handling concerns about the Fitness to Practise of registrants, acting as a complaints portal and taking action to protect the public; and,
  - ensuring high standards of education and training for pharmacists in Northern Ireland.

As the professional body it seeks to develop the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland in the public interest. This role is conducted by an elected Professional Forum.

2. As the regulatory body for pharmacy in Northern Ireland, the Society issues Standards and Guidance to pharmacists across a range of areas. This includes Standards for Community Pharmacy Premises<sup>2</sup>. This document states a mandatory regulatory requirement that: "*The pharmacy takes all reasonable precautions to prevent fire, burglary, vandalism and criminal damage ensuring that staff have received the necessary training and are aware of safety and security issues.*"

The Standards are set by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland and inspected against by the Medicines Inspectorate of the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)<sup>3</sup>.

The Society also works collaboratively with the Health and Social Care Board, Medicines Inspectorate and others in the publication of ad hoc advice to pharmacists on medicines storage and security risk assessment.

3. See also previously published statistics on pharmacy robberies, burglaries and attacks in Northern Ireland arising from a Freedom of Information request by the Chemist and Druggist magazine in February 2011:

[http://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news-content/-/article\\_display\\_list/4886715/one-in-13-pharmacies-in-northern-ireland-robbed-or-attacked-last-year](http://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news-content/-/article_display_list/4886715/one-in-13-pharmacies-in-northern-ireland-robbed-or-attacked-last-year)

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.psni.org.uk/documents/521/Community+Pharmacy+Premises+Standards.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/pas/pas-lie/pas-pharmacy-inspections.htm>