

APPG AGM/SUMMER RECEPTION – 8 July 2009

DRAFT SPEECH

Thank you Howard [Stoate MP, Dartford, Lab]

After just a few weeks as Minister of Health, I'm already acutely aware of the wide range of services that pharmacy provides to patients and the public.

This is my first chance to speak with people delivering frontline pharmacy services.

I want to know what you think about the enhanced role of pharmacy set out in the White Paper, how it affects you and how you can contribute.

We are making good progress in implementing the White Paper.

We can't deliver everything at once, but we've already achieved a great deal:

- We've appointed the two Pharmacy National Clinical Directors;
- We're replacing the "*control of entry*" system with one determined by local Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments as set out in the current Health Bill;
- We're giving PCTs new powers to take action where providers are not delivering acceptable services;
- We're setting up a regulatory Advisory Group to help implement these changes and I am pleased that Paul Burns has agreed to lead this;
- We've also published guidance on commissioning pharmaceutical services; and
  - We're underpinning the future of pharmacy by increasing pre-registration pharmacist training places in hospitals to address under supply and setting up the Modernising Pharmacy Careers Programme Board to make sure the pharmacy workforce is fit for purpose.

So, we've done a lot but there's more to do.

I want quality, prevention and patient safety to be at the heart of pharmacy services.

I want pharmacies to promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing;

**I want pharmacies to treat minor ailments and provide health checks at a time and a place that's convenient for people;**

**I want PCTs to be world class commissioners of pharmaceutical services.**

**And I want quality to be rewarded and poor performance to be dealt with effectively.**

**Pharmacies are now providing more services for their communities than ever before.**

**So it's important that people know about them.**

**Pharmacy is already a part of the 'It's Your Choice' campaign running in 24 PCTs and we're developing a communications programme to make patients and the public aware of what's available.**

**The White Paper sets out a vision of sustainable, long-term change.**

**I want you to think about how the White Paper's vision of an enhanced role for pharmacy affects you and how you can contribute as we implement that vision.**

**The Government can't do this on its own.**

**We need you and the All Party Group to continue your valuable work promoting constructive dialogue and discussion.**

**I know there are concerns about how pharmacists are treated if they make a dispensing error.**

**The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) review of medicines legislation gives us a good opportunity to look at this.**

**Pharmacists must have the confidence to report errors so that everyone can learn from them.**

**The MHRA will soon meet with the Crown Prosecution Service to discuss this.**

**They need to agree a consistent and proportionate approach that balances patient safety, the public interest and reassurance to pharmacists.**

**A strong profession needs strong leadership.**

**I'm very pleased that Bob Nicholls has been appointed the first chair of the new General Pharmaceutical Council.**

**Bob has an excellent track record at a senior level in the NHS and in regulation and I am sure he'll make the Council a great success.**

**Before I finish, I want to thank the whole pharmacy community for responding so well to the current swine flu pandemic.**

**Your role is central to an effective response.**

**The public and the Government very much appreciate all of your hard work.**

**Thank you**