

Media Release

For Immediate Release

North Yorkshire MPs Support the Call For the Introduction Of A Pharmacy Minor Ailments Scheme.

During December 2014 and January 2015 Julian Sturdy (MP for Outer York), Hugh Bayley (MP for York Central), Robert Goodwill (MP for Scarborough and Whitby), Andrew Jones (MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough), Julian Smith (MP for Skipton and Ripon) and Nigel Adams (MP for Selby and Ainsty) all visited Pharmacies within their respective constituencies. The purpose of each visit was to encourage people to use their local pharmacies to their fullest extent. This is because they are a convenient alternative to GPs and A&E when it comes to minor ailments such as, coughing, respiratory problems, colds and sore throats.

After discussion regarding how a minor ailments scheme would work in practice, all participating MPs agreed that the introduction of such a scheme in North Yorkshire would only benefit those willing to take advantage of it. The MPs also support Community Pharmacy North Yorkshire's decision to open discussion with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in the North Yorkshire area to implement the scheme ASAP.

Minor ailments are defined as, 'common or self-limiting or uncomplicated conditions which can be diagnosed and managed without medical intervention'.¹

Pharmacy based services to treat such ailments were introduced locally across the UK more than ten years ago² to reduce the burden of minor ailments on higher cost settings such as general practice and the A&E departments of hospitals. Consultations for minor ailments are less expensive when provided

¹ [Self care: an ethical imperative](#). Self Care Campaign, 2010

² [Pharmacy in the future: implementing the NHS Plan](#). Department of Health, 2000

through community pharmacy and evidence suggests that the pharmacy based service provides a suitable alternative to GP consultations.³

Each year 8% of A&E department visits involve consultations for minor ailments, costing the NHS £136 million annually.⁴ With the change in NHS systems architecture, and the prevailing economic climate, services such as these reduce costs, create GP time for the management of more complex, long-term conditions and have a positive impact on urgent and emergency services.

The NHS England evidence base report on the urgent care review, published in June 2013, highlighted the role that pharmacies could play in providing accessible care and helping many patients who would otherwise visit their GP for minor ailments.⁵

“Community pharmacy services can play an important role in enabling self-care, particularly amongst patients with minor ailments and long term conditions.”

Around 80% of all care in the UK is self-care and this is an area in which community pharmacy can make a real difference. NHS England highlighted that self-care for minor ailments can reduce dependence on emergency care services; there is a need to improve awareness among patients about how to access self-care support services; and there is a need to ensure such services are used consistently by patients.

The current workload of general practice is not declining, with a review of 1,800 GPs using the validated Maslach Burnout Inventory indicating in May 2013 that 43% of practitioners are at high risk of burnout.⁶ The consequential diversion of patients to urgent care, such as A&E departments, could be reversed if a community pharmacy service is implemented, freeing up GP appointments and capacity in A&E departments.

Julian Smith MP for Skipton and Ripon said

“We need to encourage more people to make better use of their local pharmacies. Pharmacists are highly trained and can be a more convenient option than visiting your local GP or A&E.”

³ Paudyal V, et al. [Are pharmacy based minor ailment schemes a substitute for other service providers?](#) Br J Gen Pract 2013; 63 (612), July 2013: 472-481

⁴ Bednall R, et al. [Identification of patients attending accident and emergency who may be suitable for treatment by a pharmacist.](#) Fam Pract 2003; 20(1): 54-57

⁵ [High quality care for all, now and for future generations: transforming urgent and emergency care services in England: The Evidence Base from the Urgent and Emergency Care Review.](#) NHS England, June 2013

⁶ Duffin, C. [One in eight GPs have sought help for stress in past year.](#) Pulse, August 2013

"A Pharmacy Minor Aliments Scheme could not only reduce the pressure on our GP Surgeries and A&E, but also free up GPs to offer more services locally. Delivering health services within the communities where people live and work is always important and I hope this would help deliver that."

Nigel Adams MP for Selby and Ainsty said,

"We need to encourage more people to make better use of their local pharmacies. Pharmacists are highly trained and can be a more convenient option than visiting your local GP or A&E."

The introduction of a Pharmacy Minor Aliments Scheme will not only reduce the pressure on our GP Surgeries and A&E, but also free up GPs to offer more services locally. We need to find ways of delivering a better service whilst also reducing cost and this scheme definitely meets that criterion.

Robert Goodwill MP for Scarborough and Whitby said,

"We need to encourage more people to make better use of their local pharmacies. Pharmacists are highly trained and can be a more convenient option than visiting your local GP or A&E."

The introduction of a Pharmacy Minor Aliments Scheme will not only reduce the pressure on our GP Surgeries and A&E, but also free up GPs to offer more services locally. We need to find ways of delivering a better service whilst also reducing cost and this scheme definitely meets that criterion.

Andrew Jones MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough said,

"We need to encourage more people to make better use of their local pharmacies. Pharmacists are highly trained and can be a more convenient option than visiting your local GP or A&E."

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Julian Sturdy, MP for Outer York said,

“We need to encourage more people to make better use of their local pharmacies. Pharmacists are highly trained and can be a more convenient option than visiting your local GP or A&E.”

The introduction of a Pharmacy Minor Aliments Scheme will not only reduce the pressure on our GP Surgeries and A&E, but also free up GPs to offer more services locally. We need to find ways of delivering a better service whilst also reducing cost and this scheme definitely meets that criterion.

Hugh Bayley MP for York Central said,

“We need to encourage more people to make better use of their local pharmacies. Pharmacists are highly trained and can be a more convenient option than visiting your local GP or A&E.”

The introduction of a Pharmacy Minor Aliments Scheme will not only reduce the pressure on our GP Surgeries and A&E, but also free up GPs to offer more services locally. We need to find ways of delivering a better service whilst also reducing cost and this scheme definitely meets that criterion.

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Editor Notes

Please use your local MP for your quote

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