



**COMMUNITY PHARMACY HERTFORDSHIRE
(HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL PHARMACEUTICAL
COMMITTEE)**

Media Release

For Immediate Release

30 APRIL 2020

Hertfordshire pharmacists warn: If you abuse us, you may lose us

Pharmacists across Hertfordshire today issued a plea to customers to use their pharmacies responsibly during the Coronavirus crisis – and added a warning that people who misuse the system or are abusive to pharmacists’ teams, risk losing some of their services.

The statement comes as pharmacists across the county are experiencing a surge in demand for all the services they provide – which includes dispensing medicines and giving health advice to people who might otherwise have gone to their GP.

The extra demand comes at a time of major national disruption to the supply chain, shortages of certain medicines combined with staff absences due to self-isolation and restricted access to GP surgeries.

Pharmacists and their teams are having to work even harder, not only to manage the supply of medicines but also to manage customers’ expectations during social distancing. People are having to queue to get into a pharmacy and wait longer than usual. There has also been some disruption to any delivery service that some pharmacists offer. In some instances, pharmacy staff have been verbally abused.

Rachel Solanki, joint Chair of Community Pharmacy Herts (CPH) which represents the County’s 240 pharmacies said: “All our pharmacy teams are working incredibly hard under highly unusual and very stressful circumstances. We understand the worry many people have, particularly the older and more vulnerable in the community, because some of their regular medicines are in short supply - and the frustration of having to queue to get into a pharmacy or the difficulty in getting through on the phone. We’re simply asking the people of Hertfordshire to bear with us while we deal with everyone’s prescriptions and replenish our stocks of medicines.

Stocks of common non-prescription medicines like ibuprofen and paracetamol which were in short supply are being replenished - but please only order what medicines you really need – and order them in good time. Above all, we’re simply asking everyone to please be patient.”

Girish Mehta, CPH joint Chair added: "These are extraordinary times but it is very important that our pharmacists and their teams are protected and respected. Pharmacies are currently the only place people can just turn up in person without an appointment for medicines, help and advice.

We are implementing Government policy on social distancing and our colleagues are doing all they can to make sure their patients continue to get their medicines. But there is a real risk that if we run out of medicines, staff are off sick or pharmacists are in any way at risk, some pharmacies may have to restrict their opening hours or even close.

We are asking everyone to

- please only visit your pharmacy for essential things,
- check the NHS website for latest opening hours particularly around the next Bank Holidays in May
- if you can get someone else to collect your medicines, please do as it will free up a delivery slot for someone more vulnerable."

Ends.

Notes:

For interviews with Rachel Solanki or Girish Mehta, please call Angus Wrixon, Salix & Co on 07725 555 030 or Angus.Wrixon@salixandco.com.

Community Pharmacy Herts / Hertfordshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee represents 240 community pharmacies across Hertfordshire and West Essex.

Friday May 8 and Monday May 25 are public holidays. Pharmacists ask that people should order medicines in plenty of time but don't order too soon.

Pharmacies may have to close or restrict their opening hours because of staff self-isolating or off sick – or because of the increased workload – you can check opening times of pharmacies in Hertfordshire on the NHS Website or on the Community Pharmacy Herts website.

- Only visit your pharmacy for essential things
- Check the NHS website for opening times rather than telephoning
- Follow the Government advice of using family, friends, carers or neighbours to obtain your medication. This will free up pharmacies' capacity to help the more vulnerable.-ends-