**Funding cut to hit pharmacies in [xx]**

Community pharmacies in [xx] face an uncertain future, as they learned today that the Department of Health is to impose funding cuts worth £113 million for this year. This will be followed by further cuts that will reduce funding for pharmacies by more than 7% in 2017/18.

Earlier this year the Government said this may mean that some pharmacies have to close, but recently it has not been able to confirm how many or which pharmacies could be affected.

PSNC, which is the national negotiator for community pharmacy, says the reckless funding cuts are likely to see patients suffer as pharmacies are forced to find ways to reduce their costs to cope with the cuts. They say pharmacy owners may have to consider measures such as reducing staffing or opening hours, and even stopping certain services that have previously been available for free.

Local pharmacy owners and their representatives are very concerned about the cuts.

[local pharmacist] said: "This news is extremely disappointing and I'm really worried about the impact it is going to have on my patients and the local community in [xx]. We work very hard to ensure that all our patients have the medicines they need, when they need them and that they understand how to use them and are leading the healthiest lives that they can. With these funding cuts we are going to struggle to manage and to continue to provide all of the services that we want to."

[LPC representative] said: "We are very concerned about these funding cuts and we don't understand how they are compatible with the stated aims of the NHS and Government to provide higher quality and more accessible care for patients. Although we are unlikely to see pharmacies closing immediately, the cuts are likely to lead to pharmacies in [xx] having to reduce staffing, cut opening hours and reduce some of the services offered, such as home delivery of medicines and the supply of medicines in compliance aids. All of which affect patients and will also of course add to the pressure already being placed on local GP practices and hospitals."

PSNC Chief Executive Sue Sharpe said: "This funding imposition is a short-sighted and ill-judged approach to take, particularly when alternative constructive proposals that would address the need for the NHS to make cash savings have been put forward by PSNC. Pharmacies have always met demands for help from their patients, particularly in the winter, acting to relieve pressure on general practices and other NHS providers. They have done this readily and willingly, but as they are forced to review their operating costs and consider staff cuts, patients may find that they have to wait longer to receive advice that would previously have been readily available. The NHS must recognise this as winter pressures set in and it turns, as usual, to pharmacy for help."

**The Government Imposition**

The Government has imposed a two-year funding package on community pharmacy, with a £113 million reduction in funding in 2016/17. You can find out more about the Government announcement at:

<http://psnc.org.uk/our-news/government-imposes-community-pharmacy-funding-reduction/>

This follows on from on from PSNC (the negotiator for community pharmacy) rejecting the Government’s funding package. You can read the rejection letter at:

<http://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-announcement-psnc-rejects-dh-proposed-funding-package/>

**About your local pharmacies**

Your local pharmacy is more than just a place to get medicines.  It provides a range of NHS services and ensures people can get face-to-face, healthcare professional advice without an appointment.

There are around 14,000 community pharmacies across the UK, so for most of us, there’s one very close by. In fact, 96% of people can get to a pharmacy within 20 minutes by walking or using public transport. Community pharmacists provide rapid access, without appointment, to a healthcare professional and offer a range of clinical and public health services. Most pharmacies now have consultation rooms, where you can talk with your pharmacist without being overheard.

You might be surprised at what pharmacies now offer: personalised medicines advice, help to quit smoking and to maintain good sexual health, treatment for common ailments, advice on preventing disease. And more.  It’s a package of care…not just packets of pills!

What’s more, pharmacies are part of the fabric of local communities.  They provide local employment and are a health and social care asset close to where people live, work and shop.

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**Contact**

xxx Local Pharmaceutical Committee represents community pharmacy contractors (owners) in xxx. For further information on this press release please contact:

[Contact details including phone and email]