



YOUR SOCIETY

How the Society is shaping up for its new priorities

As the demerger of the professional and regulatory functions of the Society picks up pace, a number of internal structures have changed to reflect the developments.

The Society is undergoing an important programme of culture work across the organisation to ensure that its key values of integrity, commitment, confidence, respect, innovation and achievement remain at its heart.

Changes being introduced will see the Society's main functions divided into three main areas to

cover professional services, publishing and professional regulation. This is to prepare the way for establishment of the new professional body and the General Pharmaceutical Council.

These areas will draw upon support from a range of shared central services including finance, HR, IT, policy, research, public relations and public affairs.

Speaking about the changes, the Society's chief executive, Jeremy Holmes said: "The changes that are being introduced will allow the Society to fully focus on what

members are telling us they want from a new professional body and at the same time ensure that we continue to fulfil our role as a regulator. My message to the membership is that the Society is listening and responding to what you have to say and will continue to do so throughout this period of change.

"I am confident that we will deliver a relevant, sustainable professional body that will be highly valued by members, other stakeholders in pharmacy and the public."

PROFESSIONAL BODY



Following the Clarke Inquiry, headed by Nigel Clarke (pictured above), 64 recommendations were made about what the profession wants to see from the new professional body. One recommendation was that a Transitional Committee be established to oversee the preparation for this. Mr Clarke was appointed as the independent chairman, working with 14 committee members to produce a prospectus of what the new professional body should be.

For more information on this committee and its workings please visit www.transitionalcommittee.com

The Society's Professional Body Task Force has laid important foundations in the development of the new professional body through contributing to the Clarke Inquiry and the member research. A "Customer Group" has also now been established, which will consist of the Society's three directors for England, Wales and Scotland, and its head of marketing and membership. This group will act as the champion of members.

Further information is on the Society's website at www.rpsgb.org

REGULATORY BODY

Ken Jarrold (pictured below), chairman of the Pharmacy Regulation and Leadership Oversight Group (PRLOG), held a briefing at the Society's headquarters on 24 June, to update staff on progress with forming the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) — the new regulator.

In his presentation he outlined key components a successful regulator would need, including impartiality. He discussed the expanding roles of pharmacists and technicians and new community pharmacy contracts providing new ways of working. These included the Pharmacy White Paper and Darzi Review in England, "One Wales" — setting the direction of travel for services in Wales, "Caring for People Beyond Tomorrow" — for Northern Ireland, and the Responsible Pharmacist consultation, which is the first step to freeing pharmacists from their traditional dispensing role.

PRLOG has been set up by the Department of Health to provide advice on the new regulatory body and has representatives from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, covering all aspects of pharmacy. Its aim is to work with stakeholders to make sure the establishment of the GPhC happens efficiently, safely and effectively by 2010 and to ensure the best regulatory system for the public, patients, carers, the profession and the Government.

The briefing session went into more detail about key factors that need to be taken into consideration for the new body.



NOTES FROM JEREMY HOLMES CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Be nimble and forward-looking!

Wendy Harris, our new deputy registrar, has just reminded me that I'm middle-aged.

I'd mentioned a conversation with Harry Cayton, chief executive of the CHRE (Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence), which oversees all the health regulators. Harry said he was anticipating a General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that was "nimble and forward-looking".

Wendy immediately recalled the 1970s advert for Nimble bread, featuring a hot air balloon — and I remembered it as if it was yesterday! (Of course Wendy was a little girl at the time of that campaign.)

I won't deny that there's sometimes a bit of hot air at the Society, but I like the idea of a "nimble" regulator. I used the word when Ken Jarrold, chairman of PRLOG (the Pharmacy Regulation and Leadership Oversight Group), came to talk to staff at the Society about the transition to the GPhC. It also applies to our work on the design of the new professional body. The Transitional Committee (www.transitionalcommittee.com), which has now had its first meeting, is going to be light on bureaucracy, and we've launched a number of bureaucracy-busting initiatives under "Project Energise" to make our in-house operations a little more nimble.

Lord Darzi's next stage review of the NHS in England, published in July, doesn't use the word "nimble" but it is all about being forward-



looking. Keith Ridge, the chief pharmacist for England, came to talk to the Society's Council about that review and the White Paper.

It's clear that pharmacy is a crucially important part of the future NHS, and particularly the Darzi vision of quality in primary and community care.

Hot on the heels of the publication of the Darzi report, we were asked to give evidence to the House of Commons Health Select Committee. David Pruce, our newly appointed director of policy and communications, gave an impressive performance at an oral evidence session. The Society was speaking clearly and persuasively on behalf of pharmacy, emphasising our collaborative role with other health professionals but also stressing the unique role pharmacy can play in public health, long-term conditions management and the treatment of minor ailments.

David and I have lived longer than Jacob Bell did — he was the moving force in the Society's earliest years — so perhaps we can be forgiven for feeling a touch middle-aged on occasion. But your 167-year old organisation is having a genuine new lease of life — looking forward to a future defined by cohesion and professional satisfaction in pharmacy, a wider collaboration in healthcare, and even higher quality of care for patients. Not to mention nimbleness!

To let me know your thoughts on the future e-mail positivefeedback@rpsgb.org

UPDATE ON THE WHITE PAPER FOR PHARMACY IN ENGLAND

The first half of 2008 has seen a series of NHS policy developments that will change the way pharmacists practise in England. Foremost of these is the Department of Health's publication of the "Pharmacy in England" White Paper. This was followed in July by the NHS next stage final report, and the workforce and primary and community care strategies. These need to be linked together and seen as an entirety — perhaps as a "roadmap" — for the NHS and pharmacy in the next few years.

As the English Pharmacy Board's remit is to provide strategic leadership and support for pharmacy practice in England, work to support translating these recommendations into action on the ground is our major priority. The board has been working closely with other pharmacy bodies so that this can be taken forward in a co-ordinated way that makes best use of the expertise available. The Board sees its main priorities as:

- To further the role of pharmacists in vascular checks and long-term conditions
- To provide support to develop the harmonisation of accreditation work into a national programme adopted in each SHA in England
- To facilitate cross-sector integrated working as a prerequisite for successful implementation of the recommendations

- To support the clinical services element — to work on quality standards, training and service delivery
- To keep abreast of IT developments linked to the Electronic Prescription Service
- Leadership for clinical practice development in England
- Medicines use reviews

In addition, there are other recommendations on GB-wide regulatory issues where the Society will be involved.

Many of the recommendations in the White Paper are dependent on engagement with a wide spectrum of pharmacists and key NHS staff, such as commissioners. The structure of the board is therefore a huge strength here — we can draw on experienced practising pharmacists and technicians from all sectors, and are ideally placed to support the clinical and practice developments that are now planned in England.

These developments relate to hospital pharmacy, primary care, academia and the industry, as well as community pharmacy. A recurring theme of Lord Darzi's final report is that integrated working is the key for future success. The board agrees and is working with Society staff and Council to put this into practice.

Beth Taylor

Chairman, English Pharmacy Board

NEWSROUND

English Pharmacy Board travels north to Manchester



The Society's English Pharmacy Board (EPB) headed for Manchester at the beginning of July for its first formal meeting held outside the Society's London offices. The move has been made to strengthen the board's links with members and other healthcare professionals at a local level. The Board meeting was held at AstraZeneca's offices.

A dinner was also organised in Manchester, providing an informal environment in which the board's objectives for 2008 could be discussed with guests who included industrial pharmacists and members from the Society's Stockport and Macclesfield branches.

The picture shows (left to right): Fay Hartley of the Stockport branch, EPB deputy chairman

Richard Daniszewski, EPB chairman Beth Taylor, and Shane Artis, David Andrews and Caroline Millett of the Macclesfield branch.

EPB work is highlighted in *Pharmacy Now*, the board's electronic newsletter. All editions of *Pharmacy Now* can be found at the home page of the English Pharmacy Board at www.rpsgb.org.

Why not apply for a Harkness Fellowship?

The Commonwealth Fund, in collaboration with the Nuffield Trust, is inviting applications from the UK for the 2009–10 Harkness Fellowships in Health Care Policy and Practice.

Harkness Fellowships provide a unique opportunity for mid-career professionals, academic researchers, Government policy-makers, clinicians, managers and journalists, from Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand or the UK, to spend up to 12 months in the US conducting a policy-oriented research study.

Applicants must demonstrate a strong interest in health policy issues and propose a study within the scope of the Commonwealth Fund's principal areas of focus.

The deadline for applications is 5 September, 2008. More details are available at www.commonwealthfund.org/fellowships.

RX Factor reaches final stages



Thank you to all those who applied to become a "face of pharmacy" through the pharmacy RX Factor. More than 70 applications were received, which made for a tough selection process for the judges. Short-listed entrants have been notified and auditions and interviews will take place in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff during August with winners announced at BPC 2008.

Society drops in on award-winning pharmacy in Scotland

There was stiff competition to be crowned the winner at the 2008 Platinum Design Awards, co-run by Ceuta Healthcare and *Chemist and Druggist* magazine, and George Romanes scooped the award for his pharmacy in Duns, Scotland.

The forward thinking design, clinical services area and spacious dispensary, complete with Robbie the dispensing robot are all aspects of the pharmacy that wowed judges.

Principal policy adviser Aileen Bryson from the Society's Scottish Office visited George's pharmacy to see for herself his forward-looking vision.



Principal policy adviser for Scotland, Aileen Bryson, with pharmacist George Romanes

SUPPORTING THE PROFESSION

Putting pharmacy into politics

Charles Willis, head of public affairs, outlines what has been happening recently in the world of pharmacy politics.

The Society's recently appointed director of communications and policy, David Pruce, gave the Society's views on the NHS Next Stage Review (of health services in England) by Lord Darzi to senior MPs this month.

The Society was called to give evidence to the influential Health Select Committee in an inquiry arranged to coincide with the publication of Lord Ara Darzi's final report.

The Society voiced concern about commissioning at strategic health authority and primary care trust level: how there appears to be little consistency of approach and strategy in commissioning services from pharmacy.

The summary comment by the Society was that the devil is in the detail of this report: how very little of it deals with implementation. David added that, to succeed, the review will need to integrate with existing plans such as the pharmacy White Paper which must not be left out of any future plans for primary care.

The Society has commenced engagement with a policy think-tank aligned to the centre right of political views. 2020 Health is to host a pharmacy summit this autumn, involving all relevant health professions. The event will be

chaired by the Shadow Pharmacy Minister, Mark Simmonds. The Society recently met Mr Simmonds when it organised a visit to Parkside Pharmacy in Boston, Lincolnshire. Also expected to participate will be the British Medical Association and the Dispensing Doctors Association.

The agenda for this debate is expected to include: commissioning, reduction of waste, co-operation at national and local levels, using competition to raise the quality of service and effective gate-keeping and signposting to improve the patient experience.

The Society has formed a partnership with three members of the "Health Hotel" to host a debate at the Liberal Democrat, Labour and



Paul Bennett (centre) from the English Pharmacy Board with Shadow Pharmacy Minister Mark Simmonds (left) and Alastair Farquhar of Parkside Pharmacy

Conservative party conferences. We will work with the Optical Alliance, Marie Curie Cancer and Cancer Breakthrough to discuss treatment and management of long-term conditions.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS



"Ethical dilemmas" is now in its fourth month and we hope you are all benefiting from the exercises.

In response to last month's dilemma about how a pharmacist should react to the receipt of a private prescription for diazepam — prescribed by the doctor for himself — results were as follows; 48 per cent picked answer A, 28 per cent picked answer B, and 24 per cent picked answer C.

For those of you that didn't take part you can still get involved as last month's dilemma is still available online.

All you have to do is visit myRPSGB on the Society's website at www.rpsgb.org to pick which of the options you would follow.

Once on the home page click on the grey panel on the right hand side titled "myRPSGB". You then need either your registration number or retention fee form number to set up your account.

If you do not have these or need assistance then please contact the registration team at

the Society on 020 7572 2532 or e-mail registration@rpsgb.org

The ethical dilemma is available at myRPSGB and you will receive immediate feedback about the option you chose. A breakdown of responses is provided in the next edition of *Your Society*. So, what are you waiting for, log on now!

Priya Sejpal, head of ethics

ETHICAL DILEMMA 4

A child of about 12 years old, comes into your pharmacy with a prescription for amoxicillin for his mother, who, he says, is at home in bed poorly.

What do you do?

- A. Dispense the amoxicillin for the child to take home
- B. Refuse to dispense the amoxicillin
- C. Dispense the amoxicillin and ring the mother to discuss the options

FOCUS ON PATRICK STUBBS HEAD OF MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

A man of high energy and focus

The second you engage with Patrick Stubbs it becomes evident that he is a high-energy, highly focused individual. And he needs to be. In May Patrick was recruited as the Society's first head of marketing and membership services, as part of the Society's goal to develop a separate, widely supported, member-focused professional leadership body by the time it hands over its regulatory functions to the new General Pharmaceutical Council in 2010.

Patrick has worked in and around industry for most of his career and was at IGD, a membership organisation serving the food and grocery sector, for 18 years. The organisation provides leadership, including horizon scanning, and early warning on major forces likely to impact consumers and the industry — such as the recent global food supply issues. It also offers market intelligence and training to over 1,500 global clients, including big names such as Procter & Gamble, L'Oréal and Sainsbury's. Patrick's responsibilities included providing services to these members, marketing the organisation and its services and managing an events and training portfolio.

Starting with a blank marketing canvas appears to be part of the Society's attraction for someone as tenacious as Patrick. "Having a chance to step in at the very beginning of a new organisation — to direct and fine-tune and improve — is a unique opportunity and one that I am only too happy to grab," he says. "We have an opportunity to make a real difference to the future of the organisation: how great is that?"

Patrick says that his skills in industry transfer over easily to meet the Society's specific current needs. "It's basically the same concept: you work out what people want and deliver it. The only difference here is that we are being asked to develop all of this in 18 months — a challenging timeline by anyone's standards."

Patrick has no doubts about his immediate, urgent tasks: "Maintaining as many members as possible post-demergers and providing the Society with a commercially viable future are both vital," he says. "To achieve this we need to begin delivering services that members want and need at a price they are prepared to pay. This is the key.

"It means taking an honest look at our attitudes and communications with members: Are they relevant? Are they personal? And how can we make them more so? What subjects and what mechanics will engage them? And, importantly, how do they want to be communicated with?"

According to Patrick's philosophy, members and their views need to be at the centre of



Patrick Stubbs: relishing the marketing challenge

every decision made with regard to the new organisation.

"Before taking any idea forward we need to stop and ask: 'What is the benefit to pharmacists?' This is the basis of our future success as a member-focused organisation."

Teamworking

Patrick's department comprises membership (including branches and events: all the Society's events are being brought together into one team), the library, information pharmacists and the museum. "I have inherited a great team of people," he enthuses, "and that really helps when settling in. They have been very supportive and receptive to new ideas and have lots of their own, too."

Patrick has only had his foot in the Society's marketing door for a matter of weeks, but he sees his future work spanning across the Society's activities. "As we define the membership benefits and develop the marketing and membership strategy for the future professional leadership body I will need to work with all the functions," he says. "So far I

am involved in a number of cross functional projects which include IT, practice, human resources, procurement, research, the directors for England, Scotland and Wales, Jeremy Holmes, public relations and public affairs, and publishing. In that respect it's a great role as it includes working with so many colleagues, harnessing their skills, experience and knowledge for the benefit of the membership."

Never forgetting his focus for a second, he adds: "But the key group I will be working with and for is the members — pharmacists and the wider pharmacy family. I need to listen to and work with the members as a priority to make sure that we are delivering services that are relevant to all the different sectors."

The resounding message from Patrick is that the new organisation's member network needs to be 100 per cent member-focused: a marketing challenge that he is relishing.

"We all have a rare opportunity to, literally, build this new member-focused organisation. When we get it right, we are all going to feel the most enormous sense of achievement."

Patrick Stubbs was interviewed by Jules Moar, freelance journalist

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INDUSTRIAL PHARMACISTS GROUP

The IPG's vision for the future



Industrial pharmacy setting sights on the future

The Industrial Pharmacists Group committee has set out its vision for a future professional body for pharmacy. This is:

1. Leadership for the profession — driving the development of the profession and its members by:
 - Influencing the setting of standards, fitness to practise and revalidation expectations of the GPhC and other bodies
 - Developing guidelines for the profession
 - Inspiring public confidence using the Kite mark or CE mark showing quality within the profession
2. Being an influential lobbying body and trusted partner — recognised for its role in the healthcare and scientific communities by regulatory bodies, Government agencies and other professions
3. Being a membership focused organisation (ie, offering services to help members do their jobs and develop their careers through networking forums, conferences, publications and providing training and advice)
4. Being an inclusive body for pharmacists, pharmacy graduates, pharmaceutical scientists, non-pharmacy graduates and students

The committee would like to work with all stakeholders of the profession to ensure the creation of a professional body we all wish to engage with and be proud to be a member of.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Industrial pharmacist group seminar: "The code at the coal face" — all you need to know about the ABPI code of practice for the pharmaceutical industry.

Date: Friday 17 October 2008
Venue: Royal Pharmaceutical Society, 1 Lambeth High Street, London, SE1 7JN.
Cost: Members £60 / Non-members £80
To find out more go to: www.rpsgb.org



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

In 18 months time we will all have some important decisions to make. The Society will disappear (in its current guise at least) and will be replaced by two bodies. The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) will assume the role of the regulatory body for the pharmacy profession. Anyone who wishes to call themselves a pharmacist and practise as such will need to satisfy the entrance criteria (pharmacy degree and completed preregistration training) and register with the GPhC. They will subsequently have to satisfy any fitness-to-practise and revalidation requirements set out by the regulatory body. Thus we have choice number one.

Industrial pharmacists do not, in general, need to be registered with the Society to do their jobs. We do so out of a sense of belonging and a wish to be recognised as a professional. Will registration with the GPhC satisfy this wish?

This brings me to the other body and question number two for industrial pharmacy practitioners: whether or not to join the new professional body for pharmacy. The report of the Clarke Inquiry set out a broad vision for the future professional body and now a Transitional Committee has been established to develop a detailed prospectus for the new organisation. I am delighted that Jane Nicholson (Bristol Myers Squibb) has been appointed to the committee.

The IPG is a diverse population with members spanning every area of industrial practice. We aim to appeal to industrial pharmacy practitioners young and old and ensure that the future professional body has something to offer all industry related pharmacy professionals. If you practise pharmacy in any area of industry please register as a member of the IPG at www.my.rpsgb.org

Finally, I urge all of you to tell us what would encourage you to join the future professional body. (Please e-mail janenicholson@transitionalcommittee.com or michael.d.parker@ntlworld.com.) In addition, we will be devoting time to this subject at the IPG reception at this year's British Pharmaceutical Conference lunch on Monday 8 September. For more information see www.bpc2008.org

Michael Parker

EIPG activities

The General Assembly of the European Industrial Pharmacists Group was held in Malta between the 18 and 20 April. A full report of this meeting is available on the GA 2008 page of the EIPG website at www.eipg.eu.

An electronic European industrial pharmacy journal is set to be issued free of charge (three times a year) to all UK IPG members. The publication can be found at www.eipg.eu.

Thirteenth IPG survey

The IPG periodically conducts a survey of its members to ascertain, among other things, salary levels and associated benefits enjoyed by those working in industry. The 13th IPG survey was recently sent to members and results will be published later this year.

The deadline for submissions is 4 August 2008. For further information contact Angela Canning (tel 020 7572 2412, email angela.canning@rpsgb.org)

SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS

What has the Society done for me?

Your Society spoke to Phil Parry, chairman of Community Pharmacy Wales. Phil splits his time between his family-owned pharmacy in Crymych in Wales and his many other commitments: he is member for Wales on the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, a member of the Welsh National Board and pharmacist member for Pembrokeshire Local Health Board.

YS: Why is membership of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society important to you?

PP: On a personal basis the Society has provided me with the support I needed to undertake the work I do. A good example of this is in the field of veterinary pharmacy. Although my qualification in this arena is something I am attached to, it was the confidence given by the training which was so important. That would not have happened for me without the Society's work. I am also aware, through my involvement, of the enormous amount of work done by the Society in close collaboration with organisations like Community Pharmacy Wales to create an environment in which pharmacy can perform.

YS: What would you like for the new professional body?

PP: I think a professional body is an important thing to have. The body must be able to support CPD and provide more general back-up to help pharmacists easily perform above any requirements imposed by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). Another critical role will be to assist in ensuring that regulation, by the GPhC and Government, is appropriate and workable for pharmacists. I think other bodies can have a role in this but it will be the one of the new professional body's main functions to make sure that the regulator is making decisions to minimise regulation that are commensurate with patient safety — decisions that are right for the profession as a whole.

YS: What made you go into pharmacy?

PP: Community pharmacy was the great accident in my life. I originally wanted to be a



Phil Parry: wants a new professional body that will assure regulation is appropriate and workable

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marine biologist, but was persuaded that a career in healthcare was a better option. After completing a degree in pharmacy at Cardiff and qualifying in 1979, I completed the Society's Diploma in Agricultural and Veterinary Pharmacy at Aston University. I now own and run my father's former pharmacy and my heart is in working with this community, and for community pharmacy.

YS: What is your average day?

PP: My average day depends on which professional hat I am wearing. I am often involved in meetings to promote community pharmacy services, either internally or with NHS and Welsh Assembly Government politicians and officials.

My main aim is to get the voice of pharmacy heard on key NHS issues — I find that very rewarding. As a consequence of the work of the team, the profile of Community Pharmacy Wales has risen considerably over the past few years.

YS: What has been the biggest driving force in your career?

PP: I wanted to be part of something that will make a difference and I have achieved that in two ways: the first is by working on behalf of pharmacy contractors and the second is working on the professional body through being a member of the Welsh Pharmacy Board. The two things work really well together. It is about trying to make positive things happen in pharmacy and, as important, trying to stop the bad things which can impact on the profession.

YS: What has been the most fulfilling aspect of your career?

PP: Sometimes it is very frustrating. But when you have been working really hard to get something to happen and it comes to fruition, it is an amazing feeling. An example of this would be setting up projects in west Wales for local community pharmacists to provide advice to local GPs on cost effective prescribing and a separate project to increase community pharmacy support to care homes. The medicine management work was very successful and it worked well financially in terms of containing drug costs. I sat on the project board which introduced the current community pharmacy contract in Wales. The introduction of the contract here was often difficult and by no means a foregone conclusion. More recently, other achievements include involvement in the implementation of the IT system in Wales. We now have almost universal connectivity and we are rolling out the pilot scheme of two dimensional bar codes for reading scripts, which is looking very positive.

Managing the pharmacy message

2008 has been a busy year for the Society's public relations team and the activity is set to pick up speed still further in the second half of the year.

The publication of the much anticipated White Paper "Pharmacy in England: building on strengths — delivering the future" in April has set out an exciting future for the profession. But it also presents a challenge in the shape of informing the public about the range of services and expert advice that is available from pharmacists. The Society's public relations team is

working hard to meet this challenge by raising the profile of the profession across the national media and turning up the volume on key pharmacy messages. Jean-Pierre Moser, the Society's head of corporate communications, reflects on what has been achieved so far in 2008.

Internet logo

The year started with a bang, with the launch of the Internet Pharmacy Logo campaign in January.

Although a number of legitimate pharmacies provide online pharmacy services, there are also a number of suppliers who have no professional qualifications or healthcare expertise operating from websites offering to sell medicines. In many cases, medicines purchased from such sites are counterfeit, substandard or unapproved new drugs, which put public safety at risk. The logo was introduced to offer regulation to websites, so members of the public would know which websites are bona fide.

The campaign was featured widely reported in the national media including *The Guardian*, *Financial Times*, *The Sun*, *Daily Mail*, *Sky News* and BBC Radio 1.

Hay fever

In April, the spotlight switched to hay fever with a campaign designed to highlight how



The Society's PR team (left to right): Samuel Ridge, Rebecca Hopkinson, Niklas Bergstrand, Jean-Pierre Moser, Susan McCue and Kate Thatcher

people easily confuse hay fever with cold or flu symptoms and how a visit to a pharmacy can help sufferers find the right treatment. The campaign was supported by TV presenter Melinda Messenger, whose young son has suffered severe allergic reactions as the result of hay fever. This campaign achieved high levels of coverage including BBC Breakfast, BBC Radio 5 Live, GMTV and Channel 5 News.

Marc Donovan, newly elected chairman of the Welsh Pharmacy Board, who took part in radio interviews with Melinda Messenger, says: "Pharmacy is changing so it is vital that we work to change public attitudes and perceptions of the profession. The campaign provided the Society with a national platform from which to communicate key messages about pharmacists, healthcare expertise."

Holiday health

Continuing the media momentum, the Society launched its Holiday Health campaign in June, focusing on the role of pharmacists in helping holiday-makers prepare for minor ailments commonly experienced while abroad. This campaign again achieved extensive national media coverage with BBC Breakfast, Sky Radio, BBC Radio 2 and ITV's *Loose Women* all running the story.

Kurt Ramsden, public relations officer for the Teesside branch worked on the Holiday Health

campaign. Speaking afterwards he said: "This was a great opportunity to talk direct to the public and to help them understand how to get the best out of the pharmacist in terms of expert healthcare advice and treatment."

Cannabis

The PR team also worked to promote an international cannabis symposium, hosted by the Society at its London offices. Research, which showed the potential benefits of using a

medicinal form of cannabis to treat Alzheimer's disease was promoted to the media and led to a feature on *Channel 4 News* and was also reported by the *Daily Mail*.

The future

The media work is planned to continue through 2008 and 2009 as the Society prepares the way for the new professional body. Through the pharmacy RX Factor competition the Society is currently looking to identify four faces of pharmacy to support its future media work. This has proved a popular competition with more than 70 entries having been sent to the Society. Those chosen will all receive professional media training and have the chance to represent the profession across national and regional media in four major campaigns during 2009 (see p1).

Working with the media is never an exact science and even the most well-prepared plans can fall victim to major breaking news stories, such as a major banking crisis or a Batman arrest. However, the Society's public relations team is focused on ensuring that pharmacy news hits the headlines and 2008 is proving to be a successful year.

To view the coverage of all the campaigns, visit our virtual press office at www.digitalnewsagency.com and click on "sign in" (username: rpsgb1, password: rpsgb1) and then on "coverage."