



**Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society**
of Great Britain

1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN

Tel: 020 7572 2335

Fax: 020 7572 2503

News release

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ROYAL PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY CALLS FOR PARITY IN CONTROLLED DRUG PRESCRIBING

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) has called on the Prime Minister to introduce parity between nurses and pharmacists in the prescribing of controlled drugs.

In its evidence to the Prime Minister's Commission on the Future of Nursing and Midwifery, the RPSGB points to the existing discrepancy between the ability of nurses to prescribe controlled drugs in certain conditions as independent prescribers, when pharmacist independent prescribers cannot so prescribe, even when the medicine in question is a controlled drug which they can sell as ingredients in over the counter medicines.

The Society believes that many patients are disadvantaged by the current disparity. It strongly supports a change in the relevant legislation which would bring enormous benefits not only to patients and their carers but also to the wider primary care team. As a corollary, in its submission the RPSGB has also called for both nurse and pharmacist independent prescribers to prescribe an unrestricted range of controlled drugs for patients in their care.

"Pharmacists are experts in medicines and are a recognised resource for health care professionals and patients" says Howard Duff, the RPSGB Director for England. "Allowing pharmacist independent prescribers the ability to prescribe controlled drugs will expand access to important medicines which improve quality of life by helping manage chronic conditions. At a time when pressure on the primary care team is increasing day by day, we see this extension of the pharmacists' role as vital in its ability to further support community based medicine. This

is especially true for pharmacists working within palliative care teams and hospices, where they provide expertise in medicines but cannot prescribe many useful treatments”

“The RPSGB submission to the Commission endorses initiatives such as the *Leading across boundaries* programme which promotes the concept of service redesign and delivery through multidisciplinary teams to meet the local healthcare and well being needs.” Duff continues. “This programme has a proven track record in enabling nurses, pharmacists, GPs and other primary care workers to collaborate towards new ways of working.”

Ends

**For media enquiries please contact the
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's Public Relations Unit
020 7572 2476**

Notes to editors:

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) is the professional and regulatory body for pharmacists in England, Scotland and Wales. It also regulates pharmacy technicians on a voluntary basis, which will become statutory from 1 July 2009. The primary objectives of the RPSGB are to lead, regulate, develop and represent the profession of pharmacy.

The RPSGB leads and supports the development of the profession within the context of the public benefit. This includes the advancement of science, practice, education and knowledge in pharmacy. In addition, it promotes the profession’s policies and views to a range of external stakeholders in a number of different forums.

Following the publication in 2007 of the Government White Paper *Trust, Assurance and Safety - The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21st Century*, the RPSGB is working towards the demerger of its regulatory and professional roles. This will see the establishment of a new

General Pharmaceutical Council and a new professional body for pharmacy in 2010. For further information visit www.rpsgb.org.