

Pharmacists call for Easier Access to Contraception

- **Motion on free contraception service formally adopted by Irish Pharmacy Union AGM**
- **Pharmacists propose scheme to allow women access contraception directly from their community pharmacist without prescription and without charge**

IPU National Conference Sunday 29 April: The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has formally adopted a policy calling on the Government to improve access to contraception for women by making it available from a community pharmacy without prescription and without charge, regardless of eligibility. A motion on the topic was passed at the organisation's AGM today and the IPU will actively advocate for Government to implement this.

Earlier this month the IPU welcomed the Minister for Health's proposal to introduce free contraceptive care and provided his department with a detailed submission on how this could be achieved. Speaking following the vote today, IPU President Daragh Connolly said, "We know from HSE research that almost half of women would prefer to access contraception through their pharmacy. Many pharmacists have been surprised at the strong support for this plan from their female patients and customers."

Addressing concerns on the proposal expressed by some GPs, Mr Connolly said, "The oral contraceptive pill is one of the safest and well-studied medicines available. Pharmacists would undergo appropriate training on the selection and supply of the most appropriate contraception and therefore there is simply no clinical cause for concern."

In conclusion, Mr Connolly said, "Providing convenient and affordable access to birth control should be a public health priority. Providing women with this choice will make it easier and more convenient to get contraception safely, meaning more women will use it, which should result in reduced rates of unintended pregnancy."

ENDS

Further information: Jim Curran, IPU Director of Communications & Strategy, 086 264 0469

Siobhán Kane, IPU Press and Communications Manager, 087 7751510

Graham Union, MKC Communications, 086 7790744