

Any pandemic bonus must include community pharmacists



30 September 2021 - The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has called on the Minister for Health to ensure that community pharmacy teams are included in any State 'pandemic bonus scheme'. The IPU has said that the efforts of pharmacists and their staff in providing face-to-face healthcare and ensuring continued medicine supplies to patients were unparalleled and deserve equal recognition with all other front line workers.

Speaking in advance of the IPU AGM this evening, IPU Secretary General Darragh O'Loughlin said "Community pharmacies have long been the most accessible and accessed aspect of Ireland's health service. Right throughout the pandemic and through each lockdown pharmacies maintained a full service and they have risen to every challenge.

"During the public health emergency members of Government publicly commended the role of pharmacies. Pharmacy teams went above and beyond, providing an essential service to patients and the public in extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

"Maintaining services came at considerable cost to pharmacies and pharmacy staff. The vast majority of pharmacies were hit by significant extra expense in order to remain open. Furthermore, we saw worryingly high levels of stress, anxiety and burnout among pharmacists during the pandemic.

“As the pressures of each COVID surge impacted on the health service and GP practices largely pivoted to telephone consultations, pharmacies devoted their limited resources to providing medicines, services and care to patients and the public as the only remaining walk-in health professionals available in most communities.”

Concluding, Darragh O’Loughlin said “As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential that the unstinting efforts made by everyone on the front line of healthcare are recognised appropriately by Government, including the vital role played by the 13,300 people working in the community pharmacy sector.”

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