

Increase in third level places for pharmacy welcomed



13 July 2021: The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has welcomed a proposed increase in the number of third level places for pharmacy students. Reports today have indicated that the Minister for Higher Education Simon Harris TD is seeking approval to fund 4,600 new third level places, with pharmacy being among the areas set to benefit.

Welcoming the proposal, Secretary General of the Irish Pharmacy Union Darragh O’Loughlin said, “Pharmacy is an exciting and diverse career that offers practitioners the opportunity to play an active role on the frontline of healthcare in their communities. There has always been a high demand for the limited number of third level places in Ireland. Many students have been required to study in the UK, which is now more complicated because of Brexit. Any increase in the provision of third level pharmacy education would be extremely welcome.

“As evidenced by our efforts in the COVID-19 vaccination rollout the role of the pharmacist has expanded and should expand more in the years ahead. As Sláintecare is implemented it will place care in the community at its core, the very essence of community pharmacies. All of this indicates there will be a sharp increase in the demand for pharmacists and it is appropriate that the education system prepares for this.

“Throughout the pandemic, when GPs and other healthcare providers were unavailable, many people sought advice from their community pharmacy. The dispensing of medicines is of vital

importance to the wider health system and requires significant expertise when managing medicines for patients with complex needs. Our universities currently offer an excellent level of training and graduates are in high demand due to their knowledge and expertise. With an increase in pharmacy places the Irish population will benefit from this expertise in their local communities.”

ENDS

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