

IPU Welcomes Findings to Increase Pharmacists Undergraduate Places



- **Increased education critical to ensuring the pharmacy can continue to deliver community healthcare.**

21 June 2023: The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has welcomed the Higher Education Authorities (HEA) findings that there is capacity to increase the number of education places for pharmacists in Ireland. The IPU has been campaigning for increased educational capacity for several years to address the growing shortage of community pharmacists.

A report from the HEA today found that there is potential capacity for almost 200 new pharmacy undergraduate education places in Ireland. This would include the expansion of existing programmes as well as the establishment of new education courses in the Atlantic Technical University and the South-East Technical University.

Tom Murray IPU Honorary Treasurer said, “Ireland has traditionally relied on other countries, primarily Britain, to educate our pharmacists. Last year saw just 155 new pharmacy graduates from Ireland enter the register less than half of the total new entrants to the professional register. The potential to significantly increase the education of pharmacists in this country would be hugely welcome and provide a much more solid foundation to the community pharmacy sector.”

“Community pharmacy is a vital profession that is a centre of community-based healthcare. As Ireland’s demographics change and as our model of healthcare evolves pharmacy will play an increasingly important role. We must ensure that we are securing this with greater levels of

education as has been recognised by the HEA.”

“While there is now an action plan to train more pharmacists, this will take time. There is a pressing need to deal with the shortages within the profession today. Many pharmacist vacancies are going unfilled, and this can only have a negative impact on patient experience. With a growing and ageing population, we estimate there is a significant shortfall of pharmacists working in the sector. One short term action we would like is to make it as easy as possible for pharmacists from non-EU countries to relocate and work in Ireland,” concluded Mr Murray.

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