

Plans to increase pharmacy education places welcomed



The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has welcomed plans to increase the number of education places for pharmacists in Ireland. Ireland has not been training enough pharmacists in recent years, which according to the IPU is resulting in growing pressures on the sector.

Media reports today have suggested that Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, has called on the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to increase the number of training places. The HEA is said to have issued an expression of interest to education institutes to provide additional training.

Welcoming the development, IPU Secretary-General Sharon Foley said, “Ireland currently has not got enough qualified pharmacists to support an ageing population and growing demands on the community pharmacy sector with graduating pharmacists in Ireland per 100k population below the OECD average (3.45 Vs 4.23). Traditionally, Ireland has relied on the UK and other countries to train our healthcare workers, in particular pharmacists. But we must, as a country, take ownership over educating key workers such as pharmacists.

“While we welcome the Minister’s ambition to increase the availability of training places this year it is imperative that there is a prompt response confirming the number of new places available and also any initiatives being undertaken to improve workforce planning. We would encourage all suitably experienced HEIs to engage in this process and the Irish Pharmacy Union is available to offer any practical support that may be of benefit.