

World Pharmacists Day 2020

- Pharmacists nationwide answered the call in 2020; it's now time to make good on promises

- **Pharmacy sector has been consistently undervalued and underutilised by successive governments.**

25 September 2020: Today, marking World Pharmacists Day, the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has paid tribute to the dedication shown by the country's pharmacists throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The IPU has called on the Government to repay this commitment by helping the sector and implementing promises contained in the Programme for Government. Commending the work of pharmacists, IPU Vice-President Eoghan Hanly said, "2020 has been the most challenging year in living memory for healthcare professionals. Across the length and breadth of the country, pharmacies have responded to the challenge and played a pivotal role in supporting the health of their communities. I have never been prouder of the role played by community pharmacies throughout the country." "Throughout the pandemic, we have witnessed countless acts of pharmacists and their staff going above and beyond for their patients. Pharmacies remained open, even during the most challenging days of the lockdown. To ensure Ireland had a continuous supply of all medicines, they introduced delivery services and were among the first to install protective measures in their shops. Asked by Government to do more, issuing repeat prescriptions and quickly adopting to a new e-prescribing system, they responded. Now we want the Government to repay this faith and keep their promises. "Every year, Ireland's pharmacies receive 78 million visits; this makes the sector more accessed than hospitals, than GPs or any other aspect of our healthcare system. Unfortunately, the sector has been consistently undervalued and underutilised by successive governments. "Earlier this year, we welcomed commitments towards expanding the role of community pharmacies, contained within the Programme for Government. Today we want to know when these will be implemented. "The Government has also promised to include pharmacies as part of their commitment to expand primary and community care, making the vast majority of healthcare services available in the home or close to home, rather than in our hospitals. Actions not words are now required to deliver on these promises." "We will soon reach the first anniversary of the Department of Health's formal commitment to commence talks with pharmacists on a new contract. This should include examining ways to enhance our role in the delivery of healthcare in the community. We are still no clearer on when this will start." Mr Hanly concluded by once again paying tribute to pharmacists stating, "In pharmacists, Ireland has a highly committed and expert group of healthcare professionals. They are ready, willing, and

waiting to do more for their patients. As well as thanking each of them for their service, we must quickly take them up on this offer as it will improve the health service overall.”

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