

**EMBARGO : 00.01 MONDAY 7 MARCH 2016**



**COMMUNITY PHARMACIES WELCOME WELSH GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN NEW WALES-WIDE “CHOOSE PHARMACY” IT PLATFORM AS LOCAL PHARMACIES SET TO BECOME FIRST PORT OF CALL FOR COMMON AILMENTS.**

Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) has welcomed today’s Welsh Government announcement (7 March 2016) of a new community pharmacy based national NHS common ailments service which Welsh Health Boards will be able to deliver through community pharmacies across Wales.

Today’s Welsh Government announcement includes an investment of £750,000 in an innovative community pharmacy IT platform which will be able to support the delivery of the common ailments service and other community pharmacy services under the banner “Choose Pharmacy”. The IT investment is one of a number of projects being funded by Welsh Government’s “Efficiency Through Technology Fund”.

The NHS Wales “Choose Pharmacy” service will be based on two successful pathfinder schemes that have been operating in 32 pharmacies in Cynon Valley and Gwynedd. In addition to the common ailments service, the Choose Pharmacy platform will facilitate the electronic transfer of information regarding a patients medicines when they are discharged from hospital as well as enabling pharmacies to provide emergency supplies of medicines avoiding the need for patients to visit Out of Hours or A & E services. It will also allow patients to give permission for the pharmacist to have access to their Individual Health Record to ensure that they receive the most appropriate treatment for their condition.

Russell Goodway, Chief Executive at CPW said “The announcement today paves the way for the transformation of the Wales based community pharmacies into a network of health centres located in every community in

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Wales utilising the clinical expertise of highly trained pharmacists who are amongst the most qualified health professionals working for the NHS.

“The entire Wales based community pharmacy network will be delighted to learn that Welsh Government has decided that community pharmacy should become the first port call for patients suffering from common ailments and self-limiting conditions as means of easing pressure on GP surgeries.”

He added “This development will benefit the entire primary care network in Wales as it will enable patients to choose to go to their local pharmacy to access free treatment for a range of common ailments and self-limiting conditions without the need to make an appointment and thus reducing the pressure on GP surgeries allowing family doctors more time to deal with patients suffering from more serious illnesses. They can be reassured that should the pharmacist feel that patients need to be seen by a doctor or an optician or even attend hospital then they will be advised to do so and signposted to the most appropriate clinician.

Russell Goodway also paid tribute to the NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS) whose team has developed the new IT platform. He said that CPW will now work with Welsh Government, NWIS and the Health Boards to do what is necessary to secure the earliest possible roll out of these services to all 716 community pharmacies in Wales”.

## **ENDS**

- In the four years since Welsh Government first announced its commitment to a national minor ailments service, 2 pathfinder schemes – one in an urban area and another in a rural area – have been delivering this free NHS service to local people through 32 community pharmacies in the Cwm Taf and Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board areas. This has enabled providers and partners to learn the most effective means of service delivery. There has also been an instructive and independent evaluation of the Choose Pharmacy service.

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**Operational note:**

- Interviews and filming at a pharmacy that has been running a minor ailments service as part of the CHOOSE PHARMACY Pathfinder scheme can be arranged with CPW at: Sheppards Pharmacy, Whitcombe Rd, Aberdare, CF44 7AU

The Deputy Health Minister, Vaughan Gething, will officially make the announcement at 2.15pm Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016 in Sheppards Pharmacy, Aberdare. Further information on the event from: Martyn Williams, Press Officer, Health and Social Services. Tel: 029 2082 1823. Mobile: 07896 045592. e-Mail: [Martyn.Williams@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Martyn.Williams@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

**Note to Editors:**

- Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) is recognised in the National Health Services (Wales) Act 2006 and by the Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Health & Social Services as the only organisation responsible for representing all of the 716 community pharmacies in Wales on all matters relating to NHS community pharmacy services.
- CPW is the only organisation that represents every community pharmacy in Wales. It works with Government and its agencies, including local Health Boards, to help protect and develop high quality community pharmacy services and to shape the NHS community pharmacy contract and its associated regulations. In doing so, it aspires to achieve the highest standards of public health and the best possible patient outcomes.
- NHS services run in community pharmacies in Wales include: medicines dispensing, repeat dispensing, Home from Hospital medicines reconciliation, Just in Case palliative care medicines, Emergency Supply of prescription medicines, Triage & Treat minor injuries service, Emergency Contraception (morning after pill), 'flu vaccinations, local and national public health campaigns.
- A Summary of the independent evaluation of the Choose Pharmacy Pathfinder services by ICF International can be found at <http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2015/150730-evaluation-choose-pharmacy-common-ailments-service-summary-en.pdf>
- The Evaluation concluded that "the impact and economic evaluation suggests a positive return on investment in Choose Pharmacy over the

next five years based on the performance of the service in the two pathfinders”.

- There are 716 community pharmacies in Wales which are visited by around 50,000 people every day. In Wales an estimated 5 million GP consultations every year concern minor ailments that could be dealt with at a pharmacy. Many community pharmacies are open 6 and sometimes 7 days a week. Every GP in Wales spends an estimated one hour each day dealing with minor ailments or self-limiting conditions.
- A community pharmacy based National Minor Ailment Service would reduce pressure on GPs and simultaneously improve both access and choice for their patients. And, with over 2/3rds of sickness absence from work resulting from these common ailments it would have far reaching benefits for the Welsh economy as a whole.
- The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) has recently (29th July 2015) expressed concern that fatigue among overworked GPs is becoming so prevalent that it could jeopardise patient safety on a widespread scale unless urgent action is taken.
- The Choose Pharmacy service provides free NHS advice and treatment, in confidential pharmacy consultation rooms, for acne, athlete's foot, back pain, chicken pox, cold sores, colic, conjunctivitis, constipation, dermatitis, diarrhoea, dry eyes, eye infections, hay fever, head lice, indigestion, ingrowing toenails, mouth ulcers, nappy rash, oral thrush, piles, scabies, sore throat, teething, threadworms, vaginal thrush and verruca.

**For further information from Community Pharmacy Wales:**

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