



## The Independent Inquiry into a Professional Body for Pharmacy

Leeds - Public Meeting

14 January 2008

4.45 - 7.45pm

### KEY POINTS RAISED

Following are details of opinions expressed at the public meeting, some of which are contradictory. These views in no way reflect any conclusions but may assist in continuing to develop the debate.

#### New Professional Body

- The vast majority of pharmacists wear many hats. They have had a variety of jobs and careers and the only thing that links them is a degree in pharmacy.
- The body must represent pharmacists or people with a pharmacy degree who are working in the field of pharmacy.
- It is hard to see how this could fit in with what exists at the moment. People would leave if they could because of a lack of representation.
- The new professional body must embrace generalists as well as specialists.
- The new professional body needs to attract community pharmacists.
- Currently community pharmacists are disengaged from the process.
- There should be a strong emphasis on education.
- The new professional body has to be inclusive as membership is going to be voluntary.
- Regardless of where the headquarters of the new professional body are, in London or elsewhere, the body has to be financially viable. It needs to be inclusive to ensure that.



- Too much labelling of groups goes on, these groups need to be combined and there needs to be a reduction in sub-division.
- The new professional body has got to give benefits to the membership.
- The reason the RPSGB fails to gain support is because members do not see the benefit in belonging to the professional body side of the organisation.
- The new professional body has got to offer benefits to all.
- The new body needs to bring back the feeling that it is “our” (the membership’s) professional body.
- The new professional body has got to listen in order to connect with its membership.
- The new professional body needs strategic leadership, to represent the profession and to be able to provide a voice of the profession for the media.
- The only hook for the new professional body is around education.
- Historically advances in pharmacy practice have been at the local level. The new professional body must not put a dampener on that.
- The new professional body could set standards for the superintendent position. There is currently no skill set for a superintendent.
- The new professional body should bring all the disparate element together.

#### Appointment to Council

- The current Society has no council members from hospital pharmacy. Groups get diluted out. Have to ensure this is not the case with a new professional body.
- There needs to be democracy in elections.



- Currently there is no representation from major elements of the profession, hospital pharmacy, PCTs. It has happened because the process has not been organised correctly.
- The Council must represent all elements of the profession.
- There should be less lay input than there is currently.
- Suggest co-opting lay members when they are required in an advisory role.

#### Membership

- There needs to be broader membership.
- We have to establish how we as a profession protect the public and take practice forward. This cannot be done alone; needs the support of a workforce.
- Cannot see why scientists and technicians should not have full membership.
- Scientists and technicians must be a part of the new body.
- If the new body embraces all elements of the profession it will keep people engaged.
- The new professional body should be inclusive. Should not necessarily need to be a pharmacist to be a member.
- Students should be members.
- If technicians are members of the new body, they should not be full members, associates perhaps. If the new body tried to push this, someone like the NPA would just take over.
- A membership organisation that tries to cover so many sectors will represent nobody properly.
- The profession does not want to be a member of an amorphous mass. It is not possible to equally represent a massive group. It has to be granular.



- The body should represent pharmacists as members.
- If all pharmacy is represented equally without associates or affiliates etc, what is the point of being a pharmacist; there is no setting apart.
- There should be affiliate membership for those prescribing medicines.
- The new body needs to include academics and it needs to include scientists.
- There is no consistency in levels of qualification because the Society has not been leading the profession.
- The keys to the new professional body are education, leadership and uniting as one voice.
- There should not be corporate membership of a professional body. The profession does not want chains joining en masse; it is for individual, professional members.
- The NPA currently provides corporate membership and the services are then supplied corporately but you can still be an individual member.
- Pharmacists working for chains could use their corporation as a reason not to do something and therefore opt out of the prescribed process. It needs to be a professional body.
- Fellows demonstrate scholarship and how people are thought of within the profession; we should preserve that honour.
- The new professional body should have whatever structure of honours it decides.

#### Scientists and Technicians

- The new professional body should include technicians and scientists.



- If scientists are not included it could damage the science base of the profession.
- Technicians should have their own organisation.

#### Structure and Governance

- The profession needs a single strategic, umbrella leadership body with a specialist college structure within.
- Outposts of the professional body should be based on a regional structure.
- An umbrella organisation with a college structure is a good idea, but what would the umbrella organisation actually do? Why do we need it?

#### Academy of Pharmacy Practice and Academy of Pharmaceutical Science

- There is support for the scientific element.

#### The RPSGB

- What is left of the Society, library, staff, services etc. is important. Should be the core of what is going to happen in the future.
- On the charter, no matter what anyone said, the Society did not listen. As a result the Council got wiped out.
- The Society needs to reconnect.
- Recently the Leeds branch funding was cut massively.
- You can no longer pay your membership fee by cheque.
- The current Society seems to block everything; it is as if they have a death wish.



### Other Pharmacy Organisations

- Other pharmacy bodies need to discuss what they will have to give up to become part of the new professional body in the future.
- The NPA provides good education for pharmacy assistants that you cannot get elsewhere.

### Representation

- There is concern about how the professional body will represent the profession. There are c. 43,000 pharmacists and only 5,000 hospital pharmacists.
- If the new body only includes pharmacists, how will representation of the smaller sub-groups be ensured?
- There is a need for politicians in the pharmacists of the new professional body.
- There is a hope that where politics is necessary in the professional body, it will be there.
- The new professional body should not represent pharmacists as an employer.
- The body should represent pharmacy practice.
- Need to understand the needs of those who pharmacy provides for:
  - Protect the public.
  - Take the profession of pharmacy forward.
- Protecting the public is a role for the regulator.
- The professional body has as much of a role in protecting the public in that it must know its members are up to a certain standard.
- The new body should not represent pay and conditions
- The new body should be all encompassing and represent pharmacy practice.



- There should definitely not be a trade union function in the new professional body; it is a pollutant.
- The professional body should perhaps provide protection to professional interests.
- The professional body should be a kite mark of the profession.
- Patient safety is important but so is professional safety. Pharmacists should not work an 18-hour day; this is a role for the regulator, but it is also a standards issue.
- Representation of individual pharmacists is a trade union role, but a production of a report on working shifts for example is a role for the professional body.

#### Students

- Students are a key part of the future.
- The CPP has got student membership and this works well. Success here depends on how it is marketed.
- The profession needs to be able to steer students at undergraduate level.
- It is very important to harness the students of the profession.
- The professional body needs to be a part of educating the students as to what being a professional person means. Need something to aspire to.
- A vision of pharmacists coming out of degree courses as pharmacists because the current structure is changed and the pre-registration year is included within the degree.

#### Current Gaps

- Twenty years ago, you would be proud to be a member of the professional body.



- As a member you would know everyone.
- The Society has lost its way in the last 10 years. It needs to reconnect with its members.
- The governance of the current body is too big.
- The focus has been on the regulatory side to the detriment of professional leadership for the profession.
- The profession does not relate to the current Society. It needs a focus to make you want to be a member.
- The current tiers of management are far too big.
- The Society has lost the good will of pharmacists.

#### Government

- The Department of Health owns the regulatory side, or will do in 2010.
- The members must be the ones to decide on the professional leadership side.

#### Services to Members

- The new body has to understand what the profession values.
- The body has to be collective.
- The body cannot be elitist.

#### Accreditation, CPD and Standards

- The main component of a new professional body must be being an educational body.
- The professional body should set standards; it needs to set standards of attainment at different levels.
- The branch system could provide education.
- CPD is key for pharmacists.



- The current structure of recording CPD involves the Society to a great depth. The new professional body has to offer this.
- CPPE is aimed at a basic level of knowledge.
- Support in revalidation is part of CPD.
- Should there be an education provider as well?
- Currently there are multiple education providers, but nobody is setting the standards.
- Whilst the regulator sets minimum standards, the role of the professional body is to stipulate and demand standards of professionalism.
- If you are employing someone, you need to know they have certain standards above and beyond the basic levels set by the regulator.
- The new professional body could contract people to provide these services.
- If the professional body set the standards, the university could then meet those standards.
- The professional body must be able to accredit any education being supplied by external providers.

#### Medicines

- Pharmacy is about medicines.
- If the vision is for the professional body to improve the provision of medicines, then prescribers, nurse prescribers etc, should be linked to it.

#### Promotion and Profile

- The professional body should promote:
  - Excellence
  - Professionalism



- Innovation
- The professional body should address public perception of the profession; it should be the body that corrects any incorrect information that circulates about the pharmacy profession.

#### Artefacts, Archives, Library and Publications

- The Society's heritage and custodianship of that is not where pharmacy is going. It is part of the heritage of the Society and should not be a part of the new professional body.
- History, publications etc are all part of the professional body. The new body needs the infrastructure of the learned Society.
- The library is key; you cannot underestimate the potential importance of an information service.

#### Regulator

- There needs to be definition and clarity of the regulatory function.
- Protection of the public is a function of the regulator, not the professional body.
- Standards required by the regulator are the minimum required. The new professional body should go over and above that.

#### Spokesperson

- The profession definitely needs a spokesperson, and this is a role for the professional body.
- The public and the media need to be educated so that when a question arises about medicines, they do not automatically go to the BMA.



### Evidence Base

- Pharmacy needs evidence based practice.
- Currently there is little evidence to demonstrate benefits.
- The new professional body could provide evidence or commission it.

### Model and Name of a Professional Body

- The royal college model is the model most people aspire to.
- There should be a single deanery system.
- There is a model out there and the professional body should mimic it.
- The body needs to be careful what language it uses. Most pharmacists do not understand what a royal college is, so using this could put people off.
- The wrong name could cause people to disengage from the new body, must ensure this does not happen.

### International

- The Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa (PSSA), the American Pharmaceutical Association (APhA) and the Australian College of Pharmacy Practice (ACPP) are all non-mandatory bodies but they are all successful.
- The UK has 23 schools of pharmacy, with more on the books, but we still cannot produce enough homegrown pharmacists.

### Transition

- The interim arrangements should include re-branding of the Society.
- We should take the best of the current Society and leave the rest.
- The professional body needs some people from the Society and other respected people, not necessarily from within the Society to take the professional body forward to 2010.

