

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

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THE MAGAZINE FOR PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANTS

# Call for urgent action



Leaders from across the pharmacy industry have joined forces to write to the health secretary warning that the sector needs vital investment. **Millie Browning** reports

## SPECIAL REPORT

Community pharmacy's national bodies, alongside the four largest pharmacy chains in England, have issued a direct warning about the urgent need for investment in the sector.

The bodies have warned that permanent closures among the country's 11,000 pharmacies as well as a risk of medicines supply issues are likely if no Government action is taken.

In a letter to the secretary of state for health and social care, Steve Barclay, the Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies (AIMp), the Company Chemists Association (CCA), the National Pharmacy Association (NPA), the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) as well as Boots UK, LloydsPharmacy, Well and Phoenix UK warn that the 30 per cent real terms funding cuts that pharmacies have faced over the past seven years have left many businesses in a cashflow crisis.

"Many pharmacies are now dispensing at a loss and are facing a serious cashflow crisis which we fear if not addressed will rapidly move towards many permanent closures," they say.

The organisations believe that once closures start, they will be hard to stop, as the sector is now so fragile that other

pharmacies would struggle to pick up the slack. This, in turn, raises additional worries about medicines supplies, with "serious consequences" for those who rely on dispensed prescriptions.

### A united front

Commenting on the letter, CCA chief executive Malcolm Harrison said: "Not investing in the sector will mean the continued erosion of service and, ultimately, the permanent closure of many more community pharmacies."

"It's not just hospitals and GPs that are under pressure, it's our pharmacies as well," added chief executive of AIMp, Leyla Hannbeck. "We have continuously kept our doors open, delivering accessible care, supporting the NHS; but we are reaching a breaking point. If the secretary of state and NHS decision makers want that accessible care to continue to be there for vulnerable patients then they must act with urgency."

"Our members have been encouraging those key organisations to work together for the good of the whole sector," continued NPA chair Andrew Lane. "We are showing the health secretary that we are united in our determination to take the right route – one that unlocks the full potential of community pharmacy and helps support the NHS more widely."

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### The Professional Assistant:

#### Understanding acne

This month's module focuses on acne, taking in the bigger picture, busting common myths and looking at why acne occurs, who it affects and how it can be managed with specialist treatments and self-care advice.

## SUPPORTING learning IN PHARMACY

### Technician Matters

Following our monthly news round-up on page 29, we delve into a new CPD area with a first module on gout (page 30). Our CPPE series on deprescribing opioids continues on page 32, while our practical scenario turns its attention to Alzheimer's disease.

