



The Dispensing Doctors' Association
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Inquiry into the contribution of community pharmacy to health services in Wales

We are pleased to submit the following response to this inquiry:

The Dispensing Doctors' Association (DDA) represents the interests of the 1500+ dispensing practices in the UK and promotes excellence in dispensing for the good of the 4 million dispensing patients served by those practices. Around 85% of dispensing practices are affiliated to the Association.

There are 89 dispensing practices in Wales providing dispensing services to 200,011 of their 530488 patients. Thus nearly 18% of Welsh practices have outline dispensing consent (or its equivalent) and dispense 6.75% of all prescription items. (The figures for England are similar at 16% and 7% respectively)

The Association is concerned that the recent development of community pharmaceutical services has tended to concentrate solely on those services provided by pharmacists in pharmacies to the virtual exclusion of those provided by dispensing practices to their rural patients.

There is a risk that if, in the future some services become available only from pharmacies, choice will have been diminished for rural patients and distance to their nearest pharmacy may preclude access to the service completely.

The revenue that practices receive from providing dispensing services may never have been designed to subsidise the provision of general medical services, but the hard fact is that in most cases, it does.

Thus, whenever any service provision is shifted from doctor to pharmacist, (or more accurately from surgery to pharmacy) account must be taken of the effect such a shift will have on the existing wider medical services if patients are not to be disadvantaged.

Although we favour integration of pharmaceutical and medical services wherever possible in order to maximise patient benefit and convenience, we realise that the regulatory framework under which we work does not make this easy to achieve.

The DDA is disappointed not to have been involved in these discussions on pharmaceutical service provision in Wales at the outset and trust that as a stakeholder we can be included in any forthcoming consultations.

Dr David Baker
Chief Executive

21st September 2011