



Health and Social Care Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

Rt Hon Matt Hancock
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Letter by email to mb-sofs@dhsc.gov.uk

8 April 2020

Dear Matt

I am writing in relation to pharmacy provision during the ongoing Covid-19 epidemic.

As Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee, I have recently met the National Pharmacy Association to discuss ongoing support for community pharmacies during the epidemic. As I am sure you are aware, these pharmacies are under significant pressure as they play their part in the country's response to coronavirus, including increased costs in staffing, safety and security, and providing deliveries into the community. They expressed concerns to me that many pharmacies are financially vulnerable, particularly those in the independent sector, and I know that they are very grateful for the current advance provided by the Government to help manage this crisis.

The National Pharmacy Association raised concerns that the money currently given by the Government will primarily flow through to wholesalers to ensure the maintenance of the supply of medicine, and they made clear to me that they feel additional support will be needed in order to help them fulfil their essential role, similar to that already provided in the devolved nations. They also raised the issue of pharmacists having received insufficient PPE, and a lack of clarity on access to Covid-19 testing.

In our discussions, I advised them to talk to you further about this additional support and I know that the Government will be sympathetic to this request. I am very grateful to you for your support of this vital lifeline in the UK's response to coronavirus. I hope that your discussions with the National Pharmacy Association will be fruitful, and look forward to hearing from you regarding the support you propose extending to them to aid them in their response to the epidemic.

Best wishes,

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee