

Measham Medical Unit

A threat to the dispensary and being able to get your medicines here and also the delivery service for medicines to over 60s

The government has introduced a "Pharmacy White Paper" to try and develop the services offered by local pharmacists in new ways. The ideas put forward are largely positive and will allow pharmacies to offer more services and advice such as blood pressure checks, weight control advice, monitoring of regular medication, and advice on both minor illnesses and long term conditions. **The Drs here at Measham are very much in favour of these developments**, and see them as positive ways that pharmacists with their specialist training can help promote peoples best health.

There is one change proposed in the paper that is not good news and that is the possibility of change in how it is decided if a surgery can have a dispensary or not. Currently the rule allows us to dispense medicines to all who live a mile (1.6km) or more from a pharmacy. In practice this means patients in Measham and Oakthorpe must use a local pharmacy, and other patients may choose either to get medicines at the surgery or a local pharmacy. It will also prevent us supplying any emergency prescriptions when the pharmacy is closed.

There are 4 options proposed by the government, who have no preferred option.

1. To maintain the status quo, which protects the dispensary.
2. To give the decision to the PCT without a set guideline which means we would have no way of knowing if and when the dispensary might be shut.
3. & 4. both make the distance between the nearest pharmacy and the surgery the deciding factor; in both cases, being near a pharmacy, the dispensary would shut, and all patients would have to use a pharmacy.

If you want to continue to get your medicines from the dispensary, you need to do two things **urgently**, stating that **only option one** is acceptable when determining if a surgery can dispense:-

1. Write to the department c/o **Gillian Farnfield, Department of Health Medicines, Pharmacy and Industry Group, Area 453D, Skipton House, 80 London Road, London SE1 6LH** or email PWPCONS@dh.gsi.gov.uk
2. Write to your local MP, either **David Taylor or Mark Todd at House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA**, or contact them via their websites at <http://www.davidtaylormp.com/> or <http://www.marktodd.org.uk/>

Please feel free to be supportive of other aspects of the paper which are positive, as a balanced letter making one key point can be influential.

Some Facts and Figures that are not correct in the paper as published

One of the reasons for introducing changes is that there is a lack of fairness and choice in the current situation for people living within a mile of their local pharmacy. The government response is to REMOVE the choice from dispensing patients, and yet to claim that patient choice is central to how they want to manage the NHS and this discussion. An alternative would be to give ALL patients the choice to use either the pharmacy or dispensary.

The Dispensing Doctor Association has highlighted a number of surgeries where loss of dispensing will potentially close the practice down, and in all cases there will be a reduction in staff, with redundancies for dispensary staff, but also admin staff who help with the dispensing side of the business.

The DoH believes that surgeries should not be reliant on dispensing income to subsidise the medical services they provide. Measham Medical Unit is a large, well equipped and proactive surgery that is an unusual find in a former mining village in the relatively deprived area of North West Leicestershire. It is there because of the vision of Dr Michael Tellis and the preparedness of the partners at the surgery to reinvest dispensing income to provide the surgery you now have. Loss of dispensing income could lead to a reduction of services for ALL patients at Measham, and threaten the viability of the Appleby branch surgery

The white paper suggests that Dispensing Doctors are more expensive than Pharmacists in providing dispensing services. However a review of the costs shows that on average, the net ingredient cost to the NHS per item dispensed is actually slightly less in a dispensing surgery at £149.41 than a non-dispensing surgery at £157.10 That may not seem much but saves £27million per year! These figures also ignore differences in the populations – there are more elderly patients relatively speaking in dispensing practices, who on average have nearly three times more medications per head. It also ignores any medications given by injection in the prescribing figures, but includes them in the dispensing doctor figures, thus producing an anomaly in the figures.

Please write to *give your own personal view* as to why you think the dispensary is important to you, and support us in trying to prevent a change in regulations reducing the services to 7000 dispensing patients, potentially leading to loss of jobs for all our dispensing staff, and threatening the overall services we strive to provide to you here at Measham. The deadline is in early November, but please writes as soon as possible. Send copies of your letter to both the DoH and your MP. Individual letters are essential as the DoH wants individual views which will carry weight, not a petition, which doesn't in this situation.

The DDA website has useful information at <http://www.dispensingdoctor.org/> This page allows you to download the discussion document to read at home. http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_087324