



*The launch of The Irish Institute of Pharmacy
and National Forum for Pharmacy Education & Accreditation
and FIP World Congress 2013 Dublin
By An Taoiseach Mr Enda Kenny TD, 2nd February 2012*

Address by Ms Marian Shanley,

Chair of the National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation

Good morning Taoiseach, Minister, Mr President and guests,

Thank you all for attending here this morning and showing your support for the work of the PSI and for the NF which is being launched today, together with the Irish Institute of Pharmacy.

As PSI President Paul Fahey indicated, the National Forum is a consultative body established by the PSI to advise on new principles in the way pharmacy education is delivered in this country. Its objective is the introduction of a five year fully integrated degree leading to a Masters' qualification as recommended by the PEARs report. We are happy to welcome one of the authors of that report, Dr Chris Langlely to today's launch.

In establishing the National Forum, the PSI has shown itself to be outward looking, forward thinking and courageous. It is prepared to put its support and its resources behind a body which, by its very make-up has widened the debate. It will challenge old ways and comfortable pre-conceptions and the PSI welcomes that.

Because the National Forum does not only represent pharmacy, crucially it represents the national interest as well. Its membership includes a nominee from the Higher Education Authority, Ms Mary Kerr; from the HSE, Mr Willie Reddy; from the student body, Mr Terence Smeaton and Ms Niamh Lloyd. It includes a representative for patients, Ms Mairead Lyons and it has a member who represents the pharmaceutical industry, Mr Pat MacGovern formerly of the IDA. In addition the three distinct area of pharmacy practice are represented: Mr John Barry and Ms Anne Therese Morgan for community pharmacists, Ms Evelyn Deasy and Ms Caitriona Gowing for the hospital pharmacists and Ms Maura Kinahan and Ms Rosemary Tully who are engaged in the pharmaceutical

industry. It has an international member, Professor Bob Sindelar who has invaluable experience in introducing integrated pharmacy education in Canada. The Council for the PSI is represented by its Vice President Mr Eoghan Hanly.

What the National Forum does is, it brings together all these stakeholder interests and they are wide and diverse, and they sit with the heads of the three schools of pharmacy and they identify how they can work together in developing a fully integrated pharmacy degree that will ensure that pharmacy graduates will be able to access good and fulfilling career opportunities whilst offering the best service the profession can aspire to the public at large.

The National Forum owes a debt of gratitude to Prof Caitriona O'Driscoll from UCC, Prof Marek Radomski from TCD and Prof Paul Gallagher from RCSI for their absolute willingness to engage with the Forum and seek solutions to the inevitable problems such change involves.

In order for pharmacists to lead and develop within the health care sector there is a recognition that they must change the way they are trained. By emphasising the importance of patient welfare throughout undergraduate education, it is the intention of the PSI that a strong professional identification with patient care will be the hallmark of the pharmacy profession. The profession will become an advocate for best practice ensuring that they will actively contribute when decisions affecting public health and medicines are made.

Integrated education involves the integration of the workplace in to the academic environment. It involves the greater involvement of the profession with student formation and it seeks to contextualise academic and scientific learning with workplace experience and problem solving. It is a model for education that has application way beyond pharmacy. It seeks to make university learning relevant and practical without in any way undermining academic excellence. Indeed it promises a far higher level of academic achievement than the traditional model as the process of assimilating theory and knowledge is made easier and more accessible to students when put in the context of real life experience. The enhanced learning capacity of the student will allow teachers to expand and develop programmes within their disciplines and will offer opportunities for research and innovation that are currently not possible.

It will also allow a much greater involvement with the pharmaceutical industry, opening up the possibility of high level research and development opportunities for our pharmacy graduates.

Integrated education bridges the gap between learning and doing. The teaching is enhanced by the input of practitioners and the profession is enhanced by the application of academic rigour to work practices and methods. All benefit and the ultimate beneficiary, in the case of pharmacy, is the patient and through them the State.

It is a measure of the present government's commitment to thinking outside the box and looking for new and innovative ways of lifting Ireland above the ordinary that our Taoiseach has made time out of his schedule to be here today. If change is on the Agenda, he is a willing listener and for that Mr Kenny we are grateful. But we must do our bit and deliver and the National Forum is committed to delivering a strong and sustainable model for pharmacy education that will build a profession that can be the cornerstone of safe, patient centred, accessible and economic public health delivery in this country.