

Dr. Michael Connolly,
Head of Education,
All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care,
Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services,
Harold's Cross,
Dublin 6

2nd July 2015

Re: Draft 1 of the Palliative Care Education Position Paper

Dear Dr. Connolly,

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) is the statutory regulator of pharmacy in Ireland and was established by the Pharmacy Act 2007. The PSI regulates in the public interest protecting public health by ensuring that pharmacy practitioners are qualified, trained and competent within their scope of practice. The PSI is also charged with, and is accountable for, the effective regulation of retail pharmacy businesses in Ireland, including responsibility for supervising compliance with the Pharmacy Act.

The PSI welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Palliative Care Education Position Paper, and supports the overall aim to promote palliative care education that will improve people's quality of life, patient care and palliative care service delivery.

The commitment to ensure that the development of programmes promotes an interdisciplinary approach and offering is commendable. It is well recognised that the interdisciplinary provision of care is well placed to optimise the provision of patient centred care and to empower patients as decision makers in their own care plans. An alignment in educational provision is an essential pathway to fostering this approach.

Allied with this interdisciplinarity, the PSI would suggest that the embedding of an interprofessional approach also be considered in the provision of education and training to engender enhanced professionalism and interprofessional collaborative best practice in palliative care. Interprofessional education and practice promotes a depth of collaboration that is perhaps not quite achieved by an interdisciplinary approach. In this regard it is suggested that programmes of education and training might, where possible, be aligned with the CAIPE definition for Interprofessional Education:

'Interprofessional Education occurs when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care'. (Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE) 2002)

In terms of the pharmacist's contribution to the interprofessional team, it is important to note that the role of the pharmacist has developed from being exclusively focused on a primary supply function in the preparation and dispensing of medicines to the provision of frontline clinical healthcare services, including the counselling of patients on the most effective use of medicines and treatments. The evolving role of the pharmacist means that there is much greater potential for pharmacy to contribute to palliative care services, as pharmacists are ideally placed at the frontline of healthcare provision in a primary and secondary care setting. Given the challenges presented by a changing and evolving healthcare population, such as an increase in the incidence of chronic diseases, there is scope for pharmacists to become an active member of the palliative care interdisciplinary and interprofessional team. In this way pharmacists can help deliver additional and integrated services to ensure a cost-effective and sustainable use of healthcare resources. Patients can be

given easier access to primary healthcare provision and treated in the community by pharmacists and allied healthcare professionals, emulating the ethos, culture and behaviours of palliative care, by maximising each patient's quality of life. The pharmacy setting allows this to be achieved at the lowest level of complexity resulting in improved patient access, quality, safety and affordability. Pharmacists also have a key role to play in secondary care particularly working to improve patient-care at transitions of care and promote patient safety at admission and discharge to secondary care through effective roles in medicines management and interprofessional collaborative prescribing in palliative care.

Furthermore, the PSI agrees that palliative care education should be sufficiently accessible for all health and social care professionals at post-graduate level and would draw your attention to the recent introduction of mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) requirements for pharmacists, and in particular the establishment of the Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IloP). The IloP has been established by the PSI to put in place and operate the new system of CPD for pharmacists in Ireland, and for supporting the development of pharmacy practice to ensure that it meets the emerging needs of patients and the wider healthcare system. The IloP is also responsible for the management of, and support mechanisms for, pharmacists' engagement with CPD and its commissions education and training programmes in line with national policy, evolving healthcare needs and the needs of the profession. This is in line with the provisions of the Pharmacy Act 2007 regarding mandatory CPD and the "acquisition of specialisation" by pharmacists in Ireland to safeguard the high standard of care provided to all patients in all care settings. The establishment of both the mandatory CPD system and the IloP ensures that pharmacists maintain and build on their competence as part of lifelong professional learning. The All Island Palliative Care Education Network may wish to explore collaborative approaches to the delivery of educational programmes with the IloP, which is also a member of your Network.

The PSI has also worked on the development of the Pharmacy Ireland 2020 initiative. Through this initiative, the PSI has sought to encourage, facilitate and support the greater involvement of pharmacists in the delivery of integrated, patient-centred, cost-effective health services, and the development of pharmacy services in Ireland in line with international evidence and best practice. An interim report was published in 2008 and can be accessed [here](#). Work is still ongoing in this area, with the publication of the Baseline Study of Community Pharmacy Practice in Ireland, the Baseline Study of Hospital Pharmacy in Ireland and the initiation in 2015 of the Future Pharmacy Practice Project by the PSI. This latter project seeks to explore how pharmacy practice in Ireland can best meet patients' needs in the future, including palliative care patients, through a number of means including by engaging with patients, policy makers, pharmacists and other relevant stakeholders. The results of this project are expected to be published in early 2016.

I look forward to further advancements in the area of palliative care education on the island of Ireland and welcome further opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, developments in this area.

Yours sincerely,



Marita Kinsella
Registrar/CEO