

Dear Colleague

The RPSGB has embarked upon a campaign to win a change in the law to stop the unfair criminalisation of single dispensing errors.

Key members of staff are engaged with senior figures in Westminster and Whitehall, putting the case for pharmacists and pointing out the possible consequences for those who make a single dispensing error.

The RPSGB wants to use its greatest strength - its members - to create a campaign that has a real impact upon the decision-making process and supplements the lobbying activity already being carried out. An Early Day Motion (EDM) - a Parliamentary petition - has been tabled by an MP on our behalf. The wording of EDM Number 1561 calls for the Government to amend the law that dictates such harsh treatment for pharmacists and replace it with a more proportionate response:

“That this House recognizes that community pharmacists are on the front line in providing vital services to NHS patients in a high-pressure environment; notes that under the 1968 Medicines Act pharmacists who make an error while dispensing medicines are regularly tried for a criminal offence; is concerned that this discourages healthcare professionals who fear being criminalized from reporting dispensing errors; is further concerned that this limits opportunities to record mistakes and to learn from these errors; notes that the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is currently undertaking a project to review medicines legislation; and calls upon the Government to work with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain to ensure that amended legislation offers a more proportionate response with the flexibility to recognise a genuine single dispensing error.”

The EDM is available for all constituency MPs to sign and we are asking all members to use the draft letter, found at:

<http://www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/decrimsingledisperrorsEDMletter.doc> to urge them to sign it.

Please use the link here:

http://www.parliament.uk/mpslordsandoffices/mps_and_lords/alms.cfm to find out who is your constituency MP.

Type in your **home postcode**, click ‘Search’ and the MP’s name will be revealed. Click on ‘email (MP’s NAME)’ and a screen will appear that allows you to write to the MP.

Cut and paste the draft letter into Word and amend accordingly, giving your name and addressing it with your MP’s name. Paste the amended letter into the text box provided and send the email.

If your MP is one of the very few who don’t have an email address, please send the letter to him/her at:

MP NAME
House of Commons,
London
SW1A 0AA

Every email or letter to an MP increases our chances of winning a change in the law. The legislative timescale can be slow and ponderous. A substantial response from members will greatly enhance the chances of a speedy resolution.

Please help us fight for you by joining the many pharmacists who demand fair and equitable treatment under the law, in line with other health professions.

Steve Churton
President
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

2 June 2009