



**PGEU GPUE**

Pharmaceutical Group of European Union  
Groupement Pharmaceutique de l'Union Européenne

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Community pharmacists supporting patients and healthcare systems during COVID-19

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis community pharmacists have been working with tireless commitment and determination to guarantee patients continued access to treatments. They have been accessible 24/7 also during the lockdown and have arranged home delivery services for the most vulnerable people. Throughout the crisis, they have been the first line of advice, treatment and referral for many European citizens on common ailments, successfully preventing unnecessary visits to emergency rooms.

The wide local network of community pharmacies across Europe is assisting the health authorities in distributing certified protective equipment such as face masks and providing advice to the public on their correct and safe use together with information on other hygiene measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

As recommended by the [World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe](#) (WHO Europe) and the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#) (OECD) recently many European countries have introduced changes in legislation to expand the role of pharmacists and relieve pressure on the rest of the healthcare system. Some countries have also secured additional funds to empower pharmacists in their vital work on the frontline against COVID-19. In several countries pharmacists have been given the opportunity to renew repeat prescriptions for chronic medications and distribute certain hospital medicines in pharmacies for patients who need them. In some countries community pharmacists have also activated protocols to help victims of domestic violence to report abuses during the lockdown.

PGEU President Duarte Santos stated: “Community pharmacists are ready and committed to further advance their support to European citizens and healthcare systems as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves and containment measures are gradually lifted. Therefore we strongly recommend the health authorities to make use of the accessible network of pharmacies across Europe to help conducting reliable point-of-care tests for COVID-19 when these become available and to use the skills of community pharmacists to assist in effective and efficient immunisation strategies. At the same time, we also urge governments to provide adequate support to community pharmacists for their vital contribution to the healthcare systems and for their support to the population.”