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## PUBLIC HEALTH — STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

In the first issue of this year, *The Journal* carried an article in the Agenda for 2002 series: "Specialist pharmacists in public health: are they the missing link in England?" (*Pfj*, 5/12 January, p22). The message from this article, and other items published throughout the year, is that pharmacists must engage in public health. And this week, at the tail end of the year, we focus again on the issues: in a Broad Spectrum article (p808), in a letter to the editor (p811) and in an article (p819).

There are many different ways in which pharmacists may, and it is argued should, be engaged, as these contributions show. The public health world is a much more sophisticated world than it used to be. Health education campaigns, even when they work, really only scratch the surface of what pharmacists can offer. To be fully engaged pharmacists need to understand the health needs of the population they serve and understand what part they play in the total delivery of care to that population. Then — and this is the difficult bit — they must attempt to play that part in its fullest sense and answer the real health needs (as opposed to the perceived needs) of that population.

It is a tall order and not something that will happen overnight. Maybe, in a year's time, all those who have contributed to the debate this year will be able to write to *The Journal* again and say "yes, a start has now been made".

## WHERE ARE YOU?

For the Royal Pharmaceutical Society to function properly as a regulatory and professional body, it is essential that it is able to contact its members quickly and with minimum fuss. By far the easiest way to do this is through a member's personal residential address. However, it has become clear from the recent workforce census that around 8 per cent of pharmacists choose to give a non-residential address, sometimes for concerns about their privacy and safety.

The Society has recognised these concerns and, to allay them, is seeking changes to its Byelaws (see p825 and p831) which will mean that only a pharmacist's postal town need be published in the Annual Register of Pharmaceutical Chemists. This will bring the Society into line with other regulatory bodies.

Now is a good time, therefore, with the imminent arrival of retention fee forms, to let the Society know your current residential address. It also makes sense at this time to ensure that your registered name is the same as that which you are currently practising under, in order to avoid possible confusion in those situations when registration status needs to be verified.