

# Planning well ahead

**B**ack in May, the President of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Hemant Patel, told the annual general meeting that 2006 would be a year of consultation for pharmacy. He urged all members to take part in an impending range of consultations, giving their views to help shape the future direction of the profession.

Two important consultations — on patient and public involvement in the Society and on the Code of Ethics — are already about to close (p259). Another — and potentially the most crucial — is about to take off after months of planning. On pages 260 and 261 we outline the Pharmacy 2020 project, which has as its stated aims “to identify the challenges and drivers that affect the ability of those in the pharmacy profession to fulfil their potential as health care providers, to identify good practice in pharmacy, and to prepare a forward strategy to take pharmacy to the year 2020”.

Pharmacists will have their first opportunity to engage with the Pharmacy 2020 project during the forthcoming British Pharmaceutical Conference in Manchester. The Society hopes that pharmacists attending the conference — and others within reach of Manchester — will visit the special Pharmacy 2020 stand at the conference exhibition to talk about the project and record their views at a video booth. Those unable to do so will soon have the opportunity to take part in the first of a series of consultations. Although the exact form of the consultations has yet to be finalised, a major goal is to make them accessible to as many members as possible.

And taking part is important. The Society wants to work towards a vision of pharmacy that accords with pharmacists' own aspirations. Those who decline to contribute to the project will have no right to complain in 2020 if they find that pharmacy has not progressed to their liking.

## Herceptin headache

**W**ith the approval of trastuzumab (Herceptin) for the treatment of early stage HER2-positive breast cancer by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence this week (p241), many primary care trusts will be bracing themselves for an onslaught of requests for treatment. A strong planning process will be required to deal with both the financial and organisational tasks of implementing the guidance over the next three months.

It is worth noting that although NICE approval of trastuzumab is being hailed as a long-awaited success for women with early stage breast cancer, it will inevitably divert funds away from other areas of health provision. Deciding where the money is to come from to fund provision of the drug, and the necessary cardiac monitoring, will be a headache for PCTs.

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