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Foreword

Pharmacy is going through a period of unprecedented change with new and exciting opportunities emerging across all areas of the profession.


A career in pharmacy is a rewarding one where people come first. Pharmacists play a crucial part in health care in many different settings including local pharmacies, NHS and private hospitals, health service management (local and national), the pharmaceutical industry and within universities and colleges. Pharmacists also work in specialist areas such as veterinary pharmacy and the armed forces. Others go on to careers in government departments and specialist agencies.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain is the professional and regulatory body for all pharmacists working across England, Scotland and Wales. It also regulates pharmacy technicians on a voluntary basis. The Society is responsible for a wide range of functions to ensure that pharmacists are competent and fit to practise. These functions include setting the standards for pharmacy education and training, keeping a register of pharmacists, maintaining professional standards, ensuring good practice and dealing with poor performance and misconduct.

Whether practising in the community, in a hospital or in the pharmaceutical industry, pharmacists are key players in shaping the future of health care. With nearly six million visits a day, community pharmacists work at the frontline of health care in the high streets of cities, towns and villages. Community pharmacy is changing fast, allowing pharmacists to make full use of their skills as more medicines are made available from community pharmacies. Pharmacists are becoming involved in prescribing decisions and many are moving to becoming prescribers themselves.

Being a hospital pharmacist means being part of a large multidisciplinary team. Working with health care colleagues such as doctors and nurses, hospital pharmacists can attend ward rounds and are increasingly becoming involved in selecting and advising on the treatments for patients. Hospital pharmacists also have an important role in helping patients get the best out of their medicines. With the annual NHS drugs bill topping £11 billion, good medicines management is vital.

The NHS focus is shifting ever more towards primary care, reducing the need for hospital treatment by educating people to live more healthily and helping patients to manage their illnesses as part of their everyday lives. This change has created opportunities for pharmacists interested in playing more strategic roles within their local community. Primary care pharmacists work closely with GPs, practice nurses and other health care professionals, as well as with local hospitals to ensure best use of medicines and resources across a local area.

This is an exciting time, full of opportunities for new pharmacists who are the future of the profession. I hope you enjoy the rest of your degree and preregistration year and I look forward to welcoming you into the profession. 

Hemant Patel is President of
the Royal Pharmaceutical
Society of Great Britain

