**Template Email To Your MP**

Dear (Insert Your MPs Name)

As the UK responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, with many GP Surgeries working remotely, my Community Pharmacy like all my fellow pharmacies remain open. We are working tirelessly to ensure that everyone gets the medicines and healthcare they need, when they need them.

To meet this demand, we are starting work early and working later every day and in many cases with less staff due to self-isolation. I applaud my staff for their bravery, dedication and commitment. We have also increased dramatically the number of home deliveries to all our patients, not just the shielded.

My pharmacy and other pharmacies within your constituency have remained open even on all the recent Bank Holidays to continue to serve and meet the needs of our communities during this pandemic, something that has been recognised and praised by our patients. However, in recent years we have not received the recognition or funding we need to ensure pharmacies are viable businesses.

I would like you to raise this and other issues below with the Health Secretary

* **Additional funding:** A long-term increase to total pharmacy funding is needed in recognition of the unprecedented challenges that pharmacies are already facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many community pharmacies are at financial cliff-edge – the sector urgently needs additional funding to help it to manage the new pressures being put on it.
* **PPE:** We need adequate supplies of quality personal protective equipment (PPE) in all pharmacies. Although additional funding has been granted to help pharmacies install protective barriers, we are still having difficulties in sourcing masks and aprons.
* **Prescribing patterns:** We need all prescribers to keep their existing prescribing patterns so that potential medicines shortages are not exacerbated - some GP practices are issuing 56-day prescriptions with serious implications for pharmacy capacity and medicines shortages.
* **Prescription charge exemption:** The charge may be even more difficult for some to afford in the current environment and collecting it is another administrative burden for pharmacies.
* **COVID-19 testing**: Testing for community pharmacy staff must be prioritised so that they can continue to work on the frontline and support patients.

Regards

(Insert Your Name, Pharmacy Name and Address)

**The value of community pharmacy in England:**

* Community pharmacy is the most frequented healthcare setting in the UK with 95% of the population situated within 20 minutes of their local pharmacy.
* There are over 11,500 community pharmacies in England employing 42,990 pharmacists and 19,311 technicians.
* The sector contributes a net value of approximately £3 billion to the NHS, public sector, patients and wider society in England through just 12 services, with a further £1.9 billion expected to accrue over the next 20 years.
* Community pharmacies dispense more than 1 billion prescription items every year.
* Community pharmacists make over 150 million interventions every year, to a benefit of more than £250,000 per pharmacy or £54.61 for every resident of England.
* 114,275 patients used the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) in the first 10 weeks. With NHS 111 referring patients to pharmacies as a first port of call, the CPCS diverts workload away from GPs, A&Es and urgent care services, thereby relieving resource pressures and freeing up staff time.