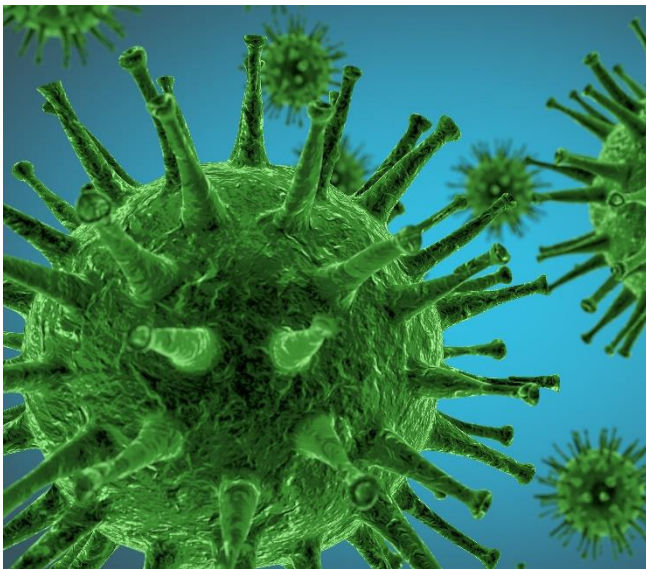


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## PRESS RELEASE

### Community pharmacists in the frontline in the fight against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19)



European community pharmacists are in the frontline in the fight against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and they are doing everything in their power to support their patients, including in areas currently in lockdown.

PGEU members have offered national governments their wide local pharmacies network to assist the health authorities in the dissemination of information to citizens on how to prevent the spread of the virus. They have launched a series of initiatives such as training for professionals and information material directed to the general public (e.g. infographics on the correct use of masks and on how to wash hands properly).

In this difficult situation it is important to maximise the use of community pharmacy practice to meet patients' needs and maintain continuity of services. Community pharmacists should be enabled to offer rapid, effective and safe solutions related to the ongoing and possible worsening of shortages of medical equipment and medicines, for instance via the compounding of disinfectants and sanitizers where appropriate.

PGEU President Duarte Santos stated: *"In this unprecedented public health emergency the dense network of pharmacies nearby the people is playing a vital role in supporting local communities. Community pharmacists are providing high-quality reliable information to the general public avoiding unnecessary scares and relieving pressure on the rest of the health care system"*.

*"Pharmacists are one of the first point of contact between the patients and the health care system and they play a key role in the identification and management of potential cases of Covid-19. As all the other frontline healthcare providers, they need to be protected against the high risk of being exposed to the virus"*.

*"At this point there are no reports of shortages of medicines due to this outbreak, but we cannot exclude possible supply disruptions in the coming weeks and months that can worsen the problem of shortages we are already facing<sup>1</sup>. In this respect, pharmacists are doing and will continue doing their best to guarantee continued access to treatments to all patients"*.

<sup>1</sup> [2019 PGEU Medicine Shortages Survey Results](#)