

## Dispensing and Core Funding

### Introduction

Dispensing is a critical clinical service that ensures the safe, effective, and rational use of medicines in the community. Pharmacists play a vital professional role in patient engagement and clinical review, identifying medication-related issues and initiating interventions. Underfunding this core service compromises patient care, threatens the viability of local community pharmacies, and increases pressure on the entire healthcare system.

### Community Pharmacy: A Strategic Health Asset

Community pharmacies are the most accessible and frequently visited healthcare providers in many developed countries, and these interactions are primarily driven by dispensing services. This makes the pharmacy network a strategic health asset and a pillar of health system resilience, providing essential capacity and accessibility. Investment in pharmacy's core service is a direct investment in strengthening the entire healthcare infrastructure.

### Policy Positions

1. **Dispensing is a Clinical Service:** Dispensing is a highly regulated, evidence-based clinical service requiring professional expertise. It ensures patients receive medicines appropriate to their clinical needs, in correct doses, and with necessary information for correct use, ensuring the safe and effective use of prescription medicines.
2. **Pathway to Wider Health Services:** Each dispensing event is an opportunity for clinical interventions, disease detection, and prevention, improving overall health outcomes.
3. **Essential Public-Private Health Infrastructure:** A well-funded community pharmacy network is a strategic health and societal asset, providing essential capacity, resilience, and accessibility, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. **Sustainable Core Funding:** A properly funded dispensing service, keeping pace with rising operational costs, is essential to the viability of pharmacies and equitable access to healthcare services, including for people in rural, disadvantaged or under-served areas.

### Call to Action

The World Pharmacy Council calls on policymakers to:

- Recognise prescription dispensing as a crucial clinical service.
- Invest in community pharmacy as a strategic public health asset to build more accessible, efficient, and resilient healthcare systems.
- Secure the future of patient care by ensuring community pharmacy funding models incorporate essential elements of viability, responsiveness, equity, separation, and efficiency.