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Warsaw, January 10, 2018 - According to ACNielsen Polska [1], every second person who buys medicines in stores lives in the countryside or in a small city of below 20,000 residents. Any changes in non-pharmacy sales will therefore affect the rights of patients living in areas outside urban agglomerations.

Pharmacies are the main place for buying medicines and food supplements and for 90% of respondents this is the most frequently chosen place of purchases. Only for 10% of Poles, stores remain the main place of purchase of OTC drugs and food supplements.

The availability of over-the-counter drugs on the retail chains or at gas stations is very often the only way to access the medicine in the event of a sudden and immediate need for effective and safe treatment of the simplest symptoms such as pain, fever and cold. For the majority of respondents (62% of people), the purchase outside the pharmacy was the result of a current need.

PASMI Polish Association of Self Medication Industry draws attention to the importance of non-pharmacy sales for almost 50% of Polish society in small towns and rural areas, where access to pharmacies is limited by geographical coverage, as well as non-working days and night hours.

"The tradition of non-pharmacy sales in Poland is very long and dates back to the 1930s. In an increasing number of countries, non-pharmacy distribution of over-the-counter drugs is allowed and developed, having in mind the patients' right to temporarily cope with minor ailments such as pain, cold or heartburn. "
- said Ewa Jankowska President of PASMI.

According to ACNielsen data, the sales value in the non-pharmacy channel in 2016 amounted to PLN 451 million. It is estimated that in 2017 sales will be lower by 2.5% and will amount to PLN 439 million. The planned introduction of trade restrictions every second Sunday will also have an impact on reducing the availability of medicines in this sales channel.

PASMI Polish Association of Self Medication Industry promotes the responsible self-medication among the society through a conscious and safe use of products classified as drugs sold without Prescription. It pursues to establish relevant legal and systematic solutions for the development of the responsible use of OTC drugs as one of the elements of the healthcare system.

PASMI cooperates actively with European organisations whose goals and operations are in line with the statutory activity of PASMI. PASMI is a member of AESGP – Association of the European Self-Medication Industry. Currently, the Association has 16 members: Aboca, A&D Pharma, Bayer, GSK, Johnson&Johnson, Klosterfrau, Omega Pharma Poland, Pfizer, Polpharma, Reckitt Benckiser, Sanofi, Takeda, Teva, USP Zdrowie, Verco, Walmark.

[1] Source: Study of consumer behaviour in non-pharmacy channel (2015)