



International Council of Nurses
www.icn.ch



International Pharmaceutical
Federation
www.fip.org



World Medical Association
www.wma.net



World Dental Federation
FDI World Dental Federation
www.fdiworldental.org

WHPA 'Be Aware' counterfeit medical products campaign

The [World Health Professions Alliance](http://www.whpa.org) WHPA, speaking for more than 25 million health care professionals in over 150 countries, is extremely concerned about the infiltration and sale of counterfeit medical products which threaten patient safety, cause added burden of disease and even death. WHPA has stepped up its commitment to promote awareness of the dangers posed by counterfeit medical products, among health professionals, consumers and patients and their national governments through an awareness campaign called 'Be Aware'. As a health professional, your role is vital in the fight against counterfeit medical products.

Why are counterfeit medical products an issue for health professionals?

Health professionals need more than ever to consider counterfeit medical products as a reason for patients' non-response or unexpected response to treatment and they should report accordingly. By visual inspections, nurses, pharmacists, physicians and dentists who are constantly in contact with medicines and medical devices may be able to detect anomalies in the physical appearances of medical products and trigger investigation.

Education of health professionals is important so that they can educate patients and populations about the risks of buying counterfeit medical products from unknown and unreliable sources. Education of health professionals is also crucial for detection and prevention of counterfeit medical products.

What can health professionals do to combat this issue?

There are some key steps that health professionals can take to identify and report counterfeit medical products, to help fight such criminal practices and make treatments safer.

BE AWARE

Be observant. Become familiar with the WHPA visual inspection tool so you can identify counterfeit medicines. If anything about medicines is unusual or different, consider counterfeit medicines.

Evaluate your patient's response to the medicine use. If treatment fails, or has an unexpected effect, consider counterfeit medicines as possible suspects.

Acquire as much information as possible about the product, its packaging, pharmaceutical properties and usage.

Where was the product procured? Find out whether it was purchased from a known and reliable source.

Actively inform your health professional colleagues if medicines have been confirmed as counterfeit, as well as other patients who might also have received the medicines.

Remove any suspect medicines from the pharmacy, clinic, hospital or consulting room. Report the suspected counterfeit to the relevant health authorities.

Educate your colleagues, patients and the public to identify and avoid counterfeit medicines by purchasing their medicines from known and reliable sources.

World Health Professions Alliance WHPA www.whpa.org

The World Health Professions Alliance brings together nursing, pharmacy, dentistry and medicine through their representative international organisations, the [International Council of Nurses \(ICN\)](http://www.icn.ch), the [International Pharmaceutical Federation \(FIP\)](http://www.fip.org), the [World Dental Federation \(FDI\)](http://www.fdiworldental.org) and the [World Medical Association \(WMA\)](http://www.wma.net). WHPA aims to facilitate collaboration between key health professionals and major international stakeholders such as governments, policy makers and the World Health Organization. By working in collaboration, instead of along parallel tracks, the patient and health care system benefit.

About the campaign

The WHPA strongly believes that the global and deadly phenomenon of counterfeit medical products will only be eradicated through an agreed framework of effective coordination, cooperation and action at the global level in order to assure necessary quality and safety of medicines in international and national supply chains. Therefore in 2010, a key objective of the 'Be Aware' campaign is to strengthen advocacy for appropriate investments in the education and capacity of health professionals to detect, report and prevent counterfeit medical products.

For more information about Be Aware, please see www.whpa.org or send an email to whpa.campaign@wma.net.