

# THE WHPA SAN JOSÉ “CALL TO ACTION” ON COUNTERFEIT MEDICAL PRODUCTS

## *World Health Professions Alliance Workshop on Combating Falsified and Counterfeit Medical Products*

**19<sup>th</sup> October 2010, San José, COSTA RICA**

We, health professionals’ organisations from Central America and the Spanish-Speaking Caribbean countries, as well as Colombia and Mexico, have gathered in this first-ever, multi-disciplinary health professionals event addressing falsified and counterfeit medical products, to recognize that such medical products present a serious public health problem worldwide, and to issue this Call to Action to patients, the general public, health care professionals, and government officials.

We recognize that increased vigilance by health care professionals and patients can help make safer use of medical products.

We are concerned that falsification and counterfeiting of medical products, including the entire range of activities from manufacturing to knowingly providing them to patients, is a vile and serious criminal offense that puts human lives at risk and undermines the credibility of health systems.

Likewise, we are concerned about the infiltration of such products in the legitimate distribution chain, leading to the unknowingly prescription, dispensing and administration of such medicines to patients by healthcare professionals.

Accordingly, we issue this Call to Action to initiate concerted action in our countries:

### PATIENTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC:

We call on patients and the general public in our countries to:

- Only buy medicines from legal outlets, such as registered pharmacies and appropriately trained personnel such as registered pharmacists
- Never buy medicines from illegal or uncontrolled Internet sites that hide their physical location and are not supervised by properly trained health professionals.
- Report a suspected falsified or counterfeit medical product to their attending health professional.

### HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS:

We call on health care professionals in our countries to:

- Work together across various disciplines to raise awareness of and action against falsified and counterfeit medical products amongst patients, the general public, their colleagues and health authorities;
- Consider and report falsified and counterfeit medical products as a reason when patients do not respond or have an unexpected response to treatment;
- Always procure medical products from a legitimate distributor or wholesaler.

### NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

We call on national organisations of health professionals to:

- Work together with the other organisations of healthcare professionals in each country in order to optimise resources, maximise the effectiveness of our efforts and pass on to the public an image of cohesiveness of healthcare professions around the challenge of counterfeit medical products.
- Work closely with the Pan American Network for Drug Regulatory Harmonization (PANDRH) / Working Group for Prevention and Combat Drug Counterfeiting, of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).
- Encourage their members to take an active role in identifying, reporting and eliminating falsified or counterfeit medical products from the distribution chain.

#### GOVERNMENT HEALTH OFFICIALS:

We call on government health officials in our countries to:

- Adopt the WHO definition of falsified and counterfeit medical products so that access to legitimate, safe, effective and affordable generic medicines will not be hindered by inappropriate intellectual property rights enforcement
- Conduct regular public campaigns educating patients and the public about how they can protect themselves from the dangers of falsified and counterfeit medical products
- Establish national reporting systems that enable health professionals to report and to get feedback about adverse events, drug-related problems, medication errors, misuse or drug abuse, defects in product quality or detection of falsified and counterfeit medical products.

The Participants of this WHPA workshop agree unanimously on the SAN JOSÉ “CALL TO ACTION” and commit to plan and act in cooperation in support of it.

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