



World Confederation
for Physical Therapy



MEDIA RELEASE

World Health Professions Alliance calls for increased action against counterfeits

Geneva, 17 May, 2010

The World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA www.whpa.org) today urged further action against counterfeiting of medical products, a vile and serious criminal offense that puts human lives at risk and undermines the credibility of health systems.

Speaking for more than 26 million health professionals in more than 130 countries, WHPA is extremely concerned that the infiltration and sale of counterfeit medical products in the legitimate supply chain can cause death and misery to tens of thousands of patients around the world. The only reason to combat counterfeit medicines is the protection of public health – disputes in trademark infringement and other intellectual property related crimes should never ever be the basis on which to define if a medical product is counterfeit or not.

“Falsely labelled, fake, spurious or counterfeited medical products which misrepresent an otherwise legitimate medical product pose a very serious public health threat which demands sustained and co-ordinated international action to control. Failure to act against this criminal activity would be a fundamental breach of the trust placed in public health structures by patients,” said Mr Ton Hoek, General Secretary and CEO, International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and WHPA spokesperson. WHPA represents more than 26 million Health Professionals worldwide.

So that health care professionals are better equipped to combat counterfeits, the WHPA announced that it is stepping up its commitment to this issue, with the launch of the ‘Be Aware, Take Action’ campaign www.whpa.org/counterfeit_campaign.htm against counterfeiting of medical products. This campaign focuses on public health and patient safety issues and enhances the role of health professionals and associations.

Through regional workshops dedicated to anti-counterfeiting, the WHPA aims to strengthen advocacy for appropriate investments in the education and capacity of health professionals to detect, report and prevent counterfeit medical products. In addition, the WHPA Be Aware, Take Action toolkit and other campaign resources are provided for health professionals, healthcare advocates and patients

The main channels for fake medical products supply include street markets in developing countries and the Internet. The harm caused by counterfeit medicines is greatest in those communities least able to afford effective regulatory systems and quality health care.

The World Health Profession Alliance WHPA

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Said Ton Hoek, “Public health and patient safety are being put at risk and now is the time to act. Increased vigilance by health care professionals and patients can help make public and individual health safer. Health professionals need to increasingly consider counterfeit medicines as a reason for non-response or unexpected response in pharmacotherapy in the patients they care for.”

Education of health professionals is crucial for detection and prevention of counterfeit medical products and is required in order for them to educate patients and populations about the risks of buying counterfeit medical products from unknown and unreliable sources.

WHPA recognizes also that for health professionals to be able to effectively play their role, national authorities must set up effective systems for the collection of information and increase national drug and medical device regulatory capacity to support the enforcement of pharmaceutical guidelines.

About WHPA www.whpa.org

The World Health Professionals Alliance WHPA is a unique alliance of The International Council of Nurses (ICN) www.icn.ch, the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) www.fip.org, the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) www.wcpt.org, the FDI World Dental Federation (FDI) www.fdiworldental.org and the World Medical Association (WMA) www.wma.net. WHPA addresses global health issues striving to help deliver cost effective, quality health care worldwide. Together, the partners of the WHPA include more than 600 national member organizations, making WHPA the key point of global access to health care professionals within the five disciplines.

Member Organisations

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a federation of national nurses associations, representing the more than 13 million nurses working worldwide. www.icn.ch

The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) is the global federation of national organisations of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists representing more than two million pharmacists around the world. www.fip.org

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT), the global voice for physical therapists / physiotherapists, has 101 national member organisations representing over 350,000 members of the profession. www.wcpt.org

The FDI World Dental Federation (FDI) is a federation of approximately 200 national dental associations and specialist groups representing more than one million dentists worldwide. www.fdiworldental.org

The World Medical Association (WMA) is the global federation of national medical associations from around the world, directly and indirectly representing the views of more than nine million physicians. www.wma.net

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

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