



# Effective advocacy for change

As a public health advocate, you know the importance of being vigilant when it comes to counterfeit medical products. Actions that you can take in your workplace, within your professional organization or towards health policy makers or the public, can help ensure patient safety. There is no 'one size fits all solution' because each country has a unique situation in relation to counterfeit medical products, regulation and enforcement, public awareness and the healthcare system. There are however some basic principles which you can adopt.

## Useful tips

- Advocacy is a long-term process so once you have introduced your idea, you may need to look for further opportunities to communicate with key stakeholders.
- Change doesn't happen quickly so you may need to repeat your message many times.
- Offer positive solutions to the counterfeit medical products issues that you face.
- Identify partners and take time to build strong relationships.

## 1. Identify what you want to change

Defining the problem will be different for each country. It could be lack of coordination on counterfeit medical products amongst health professionals, or a boom in the public buying medicines from unknown sources via the Internet.

## Advocacy Planning Cycle

(Source: *The Advocacy Sourcebook*, Water Aid, London UK, 2007)



## 2. Analyze the issue and identify the solution

This step involves gathering key facts and background information, identifying who you can work with, the target audience and setting specific objectives.

Some questions could be:

- What do we know about counterfeit medical products in our country and what information can we use?
- What do we specifically want to change? (Try to make SMART objectives – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-critical).
- Who do we want to influence?
- Who could we partner with to achieve our objectives?
- How does the system work? What is the best way to work for maximum results?

This can help lead to a tailor-made solution. For example, development of closer cooperation between the health professions so a unified group can advocate to healthcare decision makers for increased resources to fight counterfeits. Or it might be a campaign to increase awareness of the risks of buying medical products over the Internet.

Identify success indicators for each objective, to include inputs (time, resources), outputs (reports, visits, events), outcomes (media coverage, changes in policy, increased budget allocations) and impact (the effect of policy change on daily lives).

### 3. Choosing your approach and activities

The issue you have identified, the resources you have available, and who you want to reach will influence the approach you take.

- You may want to involve co-workers to raise awareness locally to issues of counterfeit medical products or you may want to encourage your health professional organization to take a more active stance on the issue.
- You may decide to use the media to get your message across. In this case, your health professional association may be able to help. Healthcare decision makers are aware of what is being said in the media on health issues and this might help you to have more influence.
- It could be possible to hold a briefing for politicians in a healthcare environment or in a parliamentary setting.

### 4. Select the appropriate tools and tactics

This toolkit contains Frequently Asked Questions about counterfeit medical products, to which you can add country-specific information. There are also fact sheets for health professionals, advocates and patients; campaign postcards; posters for waiting rooms and staff rooms; and the WHPA Joint Statement on Counterfeiting of Medical Products. A power point presentation can be downloaded from the WHPA counterfeit campaign website [http://www.whpa.org/counterfeit\\_campaign.htm](http://www.whpa.org/counterfeit_campaign.htm)

### 5. Measure the impact of your efforts

It is important to measure the results of your efforts, based on the success factors that were set for each objective.

#### Sample advocacy plan

Objective	Target audience	Key messages	Activity	Indicator
Have health professionals develop and commit to a local action plan against counterfeits	Health professionals, Professional Associations	Counterfeit medicines are a threat to patient safety and public health, and health professionals are taking action	Build a health professionals network involving at least five different professions to demand change on counterfeit medical products	Network of health professionals representing five different professions is formed and adopts action plan
Communicate about the risks of buying medical products over the Internet to at least 20% of 25-55 year olds	Patients and public	Only buy your medical products from known and reliable sources	Public awareness campaign with postcards, social media such as Facebook, media releases and interviews, letter to the editor	Numbers of visits to related information website, reported contacts with health professionals
Key politicians commit to putting control of counterfeit medical products on the health policy agenda	Members of parliament	Counterfeit medical products will only be eradicated through an agreed framework of effective coordination, cooperation and action at the global level to assure necessary quality and safety of medicines in international and national supply chains	Health professionals briefing at parliament building, with anti-counterfeit posters, position paper, key spokespeople from national health professionals associations	MP champions for the anti-counterfeiting public health cause identified and they raise the issue of public health and counterfeits in health care policy and planning



[www.whpa.org/counterfeit\\_campaign.htm](http://www.whpa.org/counterfeit_campaign.htm)