EAHP publishes health priorities for 2019 EU elections

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EAHP released its health priorities for the 2019 European Parliament elections. The document addresses future Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who are going to stand for election in late May. It aims at achieving better patient outcomes with the help of hospital pharmacists.

Hospital pharmacists are the healthcare professionals responsible for ensuring timely and equal access of patients to safe medication and high-quality pharmaceutical care in the hospital sector. As key stakeholders in medication management, they are equipped with unique skills that are crucial in complex hospital settings, thus bringing value to healthcare teams and ensuring the best patient treatment.

The 2019 health priorities of the EAHP are focusing on three key areas, namely

- ▶ Addressing medicines shortages;
- ▶ Tackling antimicrobial resistance; and,
- ▶ Investing into the future of healthcare.

EAHP calls for more international co-operation supported by a comprehensive communication system to address the growing problem of medicines shortages in European hospitals. Antimicrobial resistance, like medicines shortages, can only be lowered through multi-stakeholder engagement. Consequently, MEPs should advocate for a stronger uptake of antimicrobial stewardship teams on national level. Accessibility and affordability are key concerns of patients. Keeping healthcare high on the EU's agenda will not only ensure that these concerns are addressed but also allow for the increase of coordination and communication in healthcare at EU level which is crucial.

EAHP OPINION ON VACCINATION

EAHP fully supports the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases which was adopted in December 2018. As outlined in the Council Recommendation, healthcare workers play a crucial role in working towards the goal of improved vaccination coverage. Patients, visitors and healthcare workers who are not vaccinated can spread

infections such as measles or the influenza to very ill patients in our hospitals. Vaccinations reduce, for us all, the need to be admitted to the hospital for the treatment of preventable illnesses. To protect patients who find themselves in critical health situations and to help ourselves stay healthy, hospital pharmacists recommend vaccination wherever possible.

Healthcare workers have an increased risk of contracting infections at work and thus further transmitting them to colleagues and patients. Vaccinated healthcare workers are not only protecting themselves but they also act as a barrier against the spread of infections. One might say it is the ethical duty of every healthcare worker to get vaccinated and should be compulsory, unless contraindicated.

An investment is also needed in the education and training of healthcare workers, in particular in the hospital sector where patients in acute situations are cared for. To ensure adequate levels of patient and healthcare workers safety training on vaccine-preventable diseases, vaccinology and immunisation should be strengthened at both undergraduate and post-graduate level. Consequently, EAHP calls on national governments to offer healthcare workers opportunities for continuing education and training on vaccination.

Vaccine hesitancy, especially that influenced by misconceptions that still exist and prevent parents from vaccinating their children, is a concern to EAHP. Consequently, the Association welcomes the European Commission's intention to counter online vaccine misinformation and develop evidence-based information tools and guidance to support Member States in responding to increased rates of vaccine hesitancy.

As indicated in the Council Recommendation, vaccine shortages have direct consequences for the delivery and implementation of national vaccination programmes. The 2018 Medicines Shortages Survey Report of the EAHP identified preventative medicines – such as vaccines – as the second highest reported medication in shortage in the hospital setting. In 2018, 43% of participating hospital pharmacists from 38 different European countries underlined shortages problems with

vaccines for Hepatitis B, Pneumococcal, Tuberculosis, Tetanus and Hepatitis A.

Reports on the shortage of preventative medicines increased since EAHP's last survey in 2014 by 13%. Consequently, the EAHP would like to encourage all European institutions to tackle the growing problem of vaccine shortages. In particular, an investigation into the factors causing medicines shortages should be initiated and solutions in solving preventable shortages should be provided. European level coordination is especially crucial in the first half of 2019 since new regulations aiming at combating counterfeit drugs and Brexit might impact the availability of medicines such as vaccines.

DOCTORS ENDORSE EUROPEAN STATEMENTS

In February 2019 the European Federation of Internal Medicine (EFIM) joined the list of associations that support the 44 European Statements of Hospital Pharmacy. EFIM is the first doctors association that expressed their interest in endorsing the European Statements which represent commonly agreed objectives that every European health system should aim for in the delivery of hospital pharmacy services.

EFIM was formed by bringing together the national societies of internal medicine from each of the European countries, both inside and outside the European Union. EFIM currently comprises 35 member Societies representing over 40 000 internists. The purpose of EFIM is to re-emphasise the importance of Internal Medicine in a world of increasing specialisation.

EFIM is one of the 15 associations that support the European Statements. The 15 supporters include healthcare professional organisations representing pharmacists, nurses and doctors, patient organisations and education providers. The majority of the supporters were involved in the development of the European Statements via an open Delphi consultation.

EAHP'S 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

EAHP has released its 2018 Annual Report. This report provides information on the different activities of the Association related to its educational programme, projects – such as the Implementation of the European Statements of Hospital Pharmacy and the Common Training Framework (CTF) – as well as advocacy work.

2018 was a very successful and busy year for the EAHP. At the 23rd Congress in Gothenburg, which took place for the first time in a Scandinavian country, the

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self-assessment tool (SAT) and the Statement Implementation Learning Collaborative Centres (SILCC) initiative were presented to the public. Both the SAT and the SILCC initiative aim at driving the implementation of the European Statements forward.

The creation and publication of the 2018 Medicines Shortages Report was an important achievement carried out by the Association due to the growing problem of medicines shortages all over Europe. Other policy activities included the publication of three position papers, on antimicrobial resistance, biosimilar medicines and procurement, as well as the contribution to more than 25 consultations from different EU institutions and agencies.

EAHP President Petr Horák, who took office in June 2018, is looking forward to a successful 2019 during which EAHP will continue to improve hospital pharmacy services in order to contribute to the delivery of better patient outcomes.

ATTEND EAHP'S 2019 SYNERGY MASTERCLASS ON PROCUREMENT

On fourth and fifth October 2019, the EAHP will be holding its 2019 Synergy Masterclass titled "Procurement, tendering and decision making processes in the hospital setting", sponsored by and educational grant from Amgen. The event will take place in Brussels, Belgium. It is open to healthcare professionals, representatives from industry and all other interested parties working in the field of procurement and tendering in the hospital environment.

The Synergy Masterclass was created since health budgets throughout Europe are challenged by the high costs of innovative and exiting drug treatments. The 2 day event will address both procurement and tendering. Procurement can be performed at national, regional as well as at local hospital level. Pros and cons for the hospital pharmacies exist for performing procurement at these various levels including effects on drug cost reduction, continuity of drug supply, competition etc. Tenders are made when procuring drugs at hospital pharmacies, and various pros and cons exist for doing tenders as well. Tenders based on price only are widely accepted, however, value-based tenders including other aspects of the drugs than the price itself (eg, patient

safety issues, environmental aspects, quality-based factors and innovative characteristics) are becoming increasingly popular.

After completing the intensive Synergy Masterclass programme, participants will be able to recall important EU-legislation with regard to procurement, list elements of value-based procurement and recognise the pros and cons of doing procurement and tenders at national, regional and hospital level, respectively.

HOSPITAL PHARMACISTS RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT FREE MOVEMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF MEDICINES AFTER BREXIT

Members of the EAHP have raised increasing concerns about the availability of medicines post-Brexit in European Union (EU) countries and the United Kingdom (UK), in particular in a no-deal situation. These concerns are linked to a recent publication of the Association which underlined that medicines shortages are currently a common problem in over 90% of hospitals all across Europe.

Even though EAHP's 2018 Medicines Shortages Survey did not directly touch on the subject of Brexit a number of participants, especially those working in Ireland and the UK, highlighted that Brexit will worsen the situation. In addition to the increase in medicines shortages, EAHP fears that the robustness of the EU-wide capacity to manage the shortages problem will be significantly affected due to the fact that difficulties could arise when trying to access packs from the UK market.

Free movement of hospital pharmacists is another concern of EAHP. Efforts by the European Commission to remove mobility barriers were intensified since the financial and economic crisis, with a leading action being the revision of the Professional Qualifications Directive. However, hospital pharmacists are still not benefiting from the rules and measures adopted by the EU to foster labour mobility. Labour mobility for the hospital pharmacy profession largely depends on the flexibility of national authorities. Ireland and the UK have a high rate of inter country registrations of pharmacists due to the similarities of educational systems and language. Brexit poses a threat to this practice and could in the case of the UK and Ireland lead to a significant limitation

of cross-border cooperation between these countries.

The annual congress of the EAHP addressed many of these issues. On 28th March, hospital pharmacists had the opportunity to attend the Synergy Satellite event "Facing Brexit and FMD - Is Europe ready for the double "storm"?". This session described and discussed how Brexit and medicines shortages can affect accessibility and availability of drugs in Europe and provided information on procedures to prevent the possible negative effects of access to medicines.

EFNA ENDORSES EUROPEAN STATEMENTS

EAHP is thrilled to announce that the European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA) has endorsed the 44 European Statements of Hospital Pharmacy. EFNA is an umbrella organisation representing pan-European neurology patient groups. The Association joins a growing network of patient organisations that are supportive of the European Statements.

EFNA embraces the concept of partnership for progress – working at a high level with relevant stakeholders from the fields of policy, medical, scientific/research, industry, patient partners and other key opinion leaders. The Association follows the vision of providing a better quality of life for people in Europe living with a neurological disorder. To date eight other patient organisations as well as eight healthcare professional organisations covering doctors, nurses, pharmacist and education providers have expressed their support for the European Statements.

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