

May 2010

Newsletter



It's a great start to the summer for the EAASM, with a couple of recent developments that show how we're making a difference for patients where it matters. Of our 7 key proposals calling on the European Parliament to improve counterfeits legislation, 6 figure prominently in the recommendations unanimously passed by the Parliament's committee for Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI).

There has been speculation too, since the transfer of 'pharmaceuticals' to DG SANCO, about how Commissioner John Dalli would direct the patient safety debate in Europe. It was therefore heartening to note that in one of his very first statements on internet drug sales he name-checked our Alliance.

This is exactly where we aim to put the patient's voice – at the heart of policy – and we appreciate and recognise the active support of our members, without which we couldn't achieve such powerful impact.

EAASM continues to grow

We are delighted to announce three new members, Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD), the Primary Care Cardiovascular Society (PCCS) and the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA), taking our total cross-sectoral membership to 29 different organisations. Our voice for patient safety is already well respected and every new member adds volume to our warning message about the risks associated with counterfeit medicines.

“ We are proud to join the EAASM and support its excellent awareness-raising campaigns. Counterfeit medicines represent a growing threat to public health, and stakeholders need to work together to fight this criminal activity. Raising awareness of the issue in a responsible way is a key part of protecting patients, and crucially, maintaining trust in European healthcare systems. MSD continues to take an active role in work to better protect patients from fake, life threatening medicines. Public health stakeholders all have a responsibility in ensuring that patients get access to medicines where high quality is guaranteed through stringent supply chain standards.”

Boris Azais, Director of Industrial Policy Europe, MSD

“ We strongly support the EAASM in its effective campaigning work for improved protection of patients against the dangers of counterfeit medicines in Europe. As fake cardiovascular medicines have already reached vulnerable patients in regulated supply chains, positive outcomes from the EAASM's work are invaluable to each of us and the patients we represent.”

Dr Fran Sivers, Executive Director, PCCS

“ A diagnosis of motor neurone disease is devastating, and can turn everyday tasks into significant challenges. A person with motor neurone disease should at least feel secure that their medicines are safe and effective, which is why we are pleased to join an organisation like the EAASM which advocates effectively for patient safety.”

Kirstine Knox, Chief Executive, MNDA

Prospective members

In speaking about his time with the Alliance to date, Executive Director Mike Isles said: “Working for the EAASM has been most enjoyable and stimulating. I am now familiar with all the activities and initiatives that make this Alliance so productive and useful to its members. I am confident that the Alliance, this year, will continue to serve patient safety and deliver real progress to its members, funders and sponsors.”

Mike is in positive talks with several prospective members for the EAASM, including Amdipharm, Waymade, Chiesi, Gilead, and sanofi-aventis.

In addition, Mike is scheduled to hold talks with three leading European wholesalers – Alliance healthcare, Celesio and Phoenix – plus several major law firms in coming weeks.



Mike Isles, EAASM
Executive Director

EAASM speaks out for patient safety

5th Global Forum on Pharmaceutical Anti-Counterfeiting

The 5th Global Forum on Pharmaceutical Anti-Counterfeiting took place recently in Miami, where EAASM Chair Jim Thomson's presentation on the 'true healthcare costs of counterfeit medicines' revealed the potential value to be tens of billions of euros/dollars. Jim based his presentation – the first such detailed analysis seen to date on the topic – on recent independent and European Commission-led research, and combined both legitimate and illegitimate supply chains.

Jim also co-hosted a workshop with Professor Marv Shepherd, President of the Partnership for Safe Medicines, providing a detailed insight contrasting the US and EU medicines supply chains, with a particular focus on the EU Pharmaceutical Package and 'US importation debate' and healthcare reforms.

Feedback was very positive and the workshop was well attended, with several EAASM Members present. The EAASM will issue a mini-report based on the research undertaken for Jim's activities later this year.

7th Annual San Diego Health Policy Conference

The EAASM also attended the recent 7th Annual San Diego Health Policy Conference, organised by the Institute of Health Law Studies, California Western School of Law. As a Member of the Institute, Jim was in attendance to hear on a shocking healthcare budget fraud that is crippling access to affordable medicines by patients in the US.

Organised criminals are operating on a massive scale, in a reimbursement fraud that sees just three South Florida counties accounting for a huge percentage of the entire Medicare/Medicaid budget.

Jim was struck both by the simplicity of this and by how easily replicable it could be in the EU. The EAASM has plans to discuss the issue with regulatory authorities in Europe, while officials and investigators in Florida have kindly offered their assistance in developing a potential new EAASM project for 2010.

