



World Confederation
for Physical Therapy



MEDIA RELEASE

Health professionals unite in WHPA Taipei Call to Action, urging governments to ramp up fight against falsified and counterfeit medicines

JOINT INITIATIVE BY THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS FROM ASIAN REGION AND WHPA¹

Geneva, Switzerland, 01 July 2011

In a first for the Asian region, national health professions organisations (nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists, dentists and physicians) have discussed and endorsed the [WHPA Taipei Call to Action on Counterfeit Medical Products](#), to reduce the harmful impact of falsified and counterfeit medical products on patients and the public. With the WHPA Taipei Call to Action health professions leaders are gearing up their response to this serious threat to patient safety and they are calling on governments in the region to do the same.

Under the banner of the [“Be Aware, Take Action” campaign against counterfeit medical products](#), the [World Health Professions Association](#) workshop, held on 30 June in Taipei, tackled the grave problem of counterfeit medical products worldwide. Co-hosted with WHPA by the Taiwan Society of Health Systems Pharmacists (THSP), the workshop brought together more than 50 participants from Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Taiwan.

Participants jointly agreed on the following four key strategies for the basis of a comprehensive regional action plan against counterfeiting of medical products – to increase capacity of healthcare professionals, to foster regional cooperation initiatives, to strengthen collaborative practice, and to improve collaboration with health and enforcement authorities and with other key stakeholders.

Ton Hoek, speaking on behalf of the World Health Professions Alliance, stressed the importance of vigilance when it comes to falsified and counterfeit medical products. “Health professionals are deeply concerned by this serious public health threat, which demands sustained, coordinated international action to control it. Failure to act to prevent falsification of essential medicines would be a fundamental breach of the trust patients place in public health structures.”

The keynote address was presented by Oliver Yoa-Pu Hu, Ph.D., FAAPS, Minister without Portfolio, Taiwan. He spoke on the collaborative combat against counterfeit medical products and summarised activities against counterfeits around the world.

Other presenters included:

- Deng Shin Tang, President of the TSHP, stated that health professionals must continue to work together and that in Asia, this workshop has given the impetus to health professionals in the region to continue this work together.
- Xuanhao Chan, of the International Pharmaceutical Federation, also representing WHPA, showed what drives people to buy counterfeit medical products and where national multi-sectorial initiatives against counterfeiting have been implemented.

¹ World Health Professions Alliance <http://www.whpa.org>

- Teresita Barcelo, of the Philippines Nurses Association, said that the WHPA Taipei Call to Action will be very useful for the health professionals from the Philippines and from throughout the region, to advocate to their governments in order to keep counterfeiting on the public health agenda.
- Wonchat Subhachaturas, WMA President, Thailand urged all the health professions to continue the combat together, with the World Health Professions Alliance, and with national alliances of health professionals.
- Deputy Minister, Department of Health, Mei-Ling Hsiao, stated that combatting counterfeiting of drugs in every country not only belongs to Ministries of Health but also includes prosecution departments, and wider interdepartmental cooperation. She also urged health professionals to show the costs of counterfeiting, and to strongly advocate to governments in economic terms and well as in terms of patient safety and public health.
- Paula de Cola and Emma Andrews of Pfizer Inc shared examples of advocacy in action and urged healthcare professionals to find ways to continue to work collaboratively and to advance the Call to Action in their countries.
- Ivan Ho, Director of Global Security Asia Pacific, Pfizer Inc, highlighted some of Pfizer's extensive activities to combat counterfeit medicines. He noted that Pfizer has uncovered examples of counterfeit medicinal products in over one hundred countries.

These speakers provided a clear picture of the severity and complexity of the problem, as well as the efforts being made by their organisations to fight it – to define, combat and penalise the production and distribution of counterfeit medical products.

The workshop recognised that counterfeit medical products are, above all, a threat to patient safety with grave consequences in terms of increased disease burden, mortality and costs for healthcare systems.

About WHPA www.whpa.org

The World Health Professions 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.

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, see www.whpa.org/counterfeit_campaign.htm or send an email to whpa.campaign@wma.net

See WHPA Taipei Call to Action www.whpa.org/news/WHPA_Taipei_Call_to_Action2011.pdf

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