

2007 – 2008 Progress Report: Global Pharmacy Education Taskforce

April 2008

The Taskforce is convened by the FIP as a collection of stakeholders representing various global, regional and national networks with the goal of coordinating and catalyzing action to develop pharmacy education. The following summarizes and highlights the recent developments and profound steps that have been taken within this multi-faceted Taskforce to accomplish the aforementioned objective.

It was in September 2007 that the second Global Pharmacy Education Consultation was held at the FIP congress in Beijing with WHO and UNESCO. The focus of the consultation was to build consensus on an Action Plan that would seek to facilitate comprehensive pharmacy education and development to be carried out by the Pharmacy Education Taskforce. With an emphasis on concrete action, attainable goals and tangible results, the Action Plan identified three key areas of focus – quality assurance, academic workforce and institutional capacity, vision for pharmacy education and competency.

Working with WHO, UNESCO and other international partners

Formal discussions for collaboration with WHO and UNESCO were initiated in November of 2007 where an agreement was reached to work together in the Pharmacy Education Taskforce. This unique tripartite partnership worked to produce the finalization of the 2008-2010 Action Plan in January 2008 with endorsement by the FIP Bureau. The work on the Action Plan came to fruition on March 6th 2008 when it was officially launched with WHO and UNESCO at the Global Health Workforce Alliance Global Forum in Kampala, Uganda.

In February 2008 the FIP was officiated as a partner of the Avicenna directories and participated in the first meeting of the advisory group (www.avicennadirectories.org). The Avicenna directories will be the first online comprehensive directory of medical, public health and pharmacy schools (thus replacing the current world list of pharmacy schools). Other partners include WHO, World Federation for Medical Education, UNESCO, World Federation of Public Health Associations, Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research, International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities and will be hosted at the University of Copenhagen.

New Taskforce structure

A Terms of Reference to operationalise the Taskforce with a new structure fit to implement the Action Plan was developed and adopted by the FIP Executive Committee in March 2008. The Terms of Reference will establish a regionally representative Taskforce Advisory Group, Project Leads, Project Teams, network of pharmacy schools and partners to support the implementation of the Action Plan. The FIP Bureau and Executive Committee will continue to oversee the progress of the Taskforce and Prof Henri R. Manasse will serve as the Bureau Committee Liaison to the initiative. A Program Director and Communications Liaison are being appointed to provide operational support and coordinate internal and external communication. Current Taskforce members who have initiated development thus far will continue to contribute in the advisory group and project teams.

Pharmacy Education Action Plan Progress

The Pharmacy Education Action Plan 2008-2010 was developed through two global consultations before coming to a consensus on the following objectives on three priority domains of quality assurance, academic and institutional capacity, vision for pharmacy education and competency:

1. To define pharmacy service competencies across all settings and levels of the health system.
2. To set educational objectives aligned with competencies and develop a framework that considers the entire pharmacy education continuum from undergraduate education through to continuing professional development at the post-graduate level.
3. To develop a global framework for quality assurance and the development of accreditation systems (e.g. development of standards for educational institutions and programs) in pharmacy education.
4. To gather and analyse data on academic/faculty workforce, and review and develop capacity development strategies that meet local, regional or global needs.
5. To guide stakeholders towards an accepted holistic vision for the entire continuum of pharmacy education at global, regional and local levels.
6. To provide advocacy and technical guidance to country level stakeholders and educational institutions.
7. To establish a global platform for ongoing dialogue, sharing of evidence, practices, lessons learnt, resources and tools for pharmacy education and workforce planning.

Project Team Leads to steer activities in each priority domain were appointed in March 2008. Mr Mike Rouse, convener of the International Forum for Quality Assurance in Pharmacy Education was appointed Project Lead for quality assurance. Professor Claire Anderson, past president FIP Academic Section will be the Project Lead for academic workforce and institutional capacity. Professor Ian Bates, Vice-President European Association of Faculties of Pharmacy will be the Project Lead on developing a vision for pharmacy education and competency framework. These Project Team Leads have developed Project Plans within each domain and are in the process of forming Project Teams comprised of active expert contributors.

A proposal was developed to establish a network of schools of pharmacy (representative of all regions) to participate in the Action Plan process, contribute towards consultations, share experiences and resources, provide data and assist with field testing of tools and frameworks. Such a network will be open and participatory and it is intended that the network will broaden over the course of the Action Plan. Expressions of interest from over 20 universities who have participated in the global consultations and Taskforce activities thus far were received. An application from this network was submitted to UNESCO as part of the university network program UNITWIN in April 2008.

Other steps taken by the Pharmacy Education Taskforce to achieve the objectives of the Action Plan include the submission of articles describing the Action Plan process and concept of needs-based education to the American Journal for Pharmacy Education (AJPE) and Human Resources for Health (HRH) journals for publication in mid to late 2008. These articles having been submitted to prominent journals work to raise support and awareness of the purpose and aims of the Taskforce as well as provide an international mechanism by which communication with a global audience can be accomplished.

Next steps

The Pharmacy Education Taskforce is always looking ahead, and there are developments in the works for upcoming conferences and meetings that will help to strengthen and expand the scope of the Taskforce. Among these is a session to be held by the Taskforce during the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP) in Chicago in July of 2008 entitled 'First do no harm: collaboration vs colonization' to align with the conference themed 'global pharmacy.' The Taskforce will take part in a Plenary: Panel and Discussion -Education and Workforce Issues. Developing & developed countries. education at the International Social Pharmacy Workshop in New Zealand in July 2008 in addition to running a focus group workshop on culture and competency to be held during the conference. This is aimed at better understanding what 'competency' means to different cultures and how to break barriers associated with the topic. Further global consultation will take place at the 2008 FIP congress in Basel at a parallel session on Wednesday 0900-1200 September 3rd.

Thus significant progress has been made by the Pharmacy Education Taskforce. With the tripartite partnership between WHO, UNESCO and FIP, a network of universities in the making, project plans in place, it is clear that there is an exciting future ahead for this initiative and the impact is anticipated to be hugely beneficial on a global scale. There is much anticipated of this group, and the Taskforce together with the FIP Bureau and partners WHO and UNESCO are doing the utmost to ensure the proper action is in motion to fulfill the goals of the Pharmacy Education Action Plan 2008-2010.