

Intervention on provisional agenda item 5.5 Universal Health Coverage - Community health workers delivering primary health care opportunities and challenges

144th EXECUTIVE BOARD

Speaker: Ms Zuzana Kusynová, from the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)

Honourable Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), which represents over four million pharmacists worldwide.

As highlighted in the Report¹ by the WHO Director-General, investments in universal health coverage, including a substantial portion towards developing the workforce, will generate up to a 40% return on investment over a five-year period. Some countries have already established strategies stimulating interprofessional collaboration and optimising healthcare delivery, such as programmes encouraging patients to visit pharmacies, rather than physicians, as their first port of call for minor conditions. These have proven to reduce the burden on physicians in primary care, and to enable better use of available resources.

As we stressed at the Global Conference on Primary Health Care held in Astana, Kazakhstan, in October 2018, pharmacists are easily accessible and approachable health professionals, and they are an essential part of the provision of integrated, people-centred services in primary health care.

The roles of pharmacists range from communicators and quality medicine suppliers to supervisors, collaborators and health promoters — and these roles are continually expanding. In many countries, pharmacists screen for diseases and encourage disease prevention (through lifestyle advice and administering vaccines), improve medicines adherence, monitor chronic conditions and refer patients to other health care professionals if needed.

Pharmacists are recognised as a trustworthy source of information and advice. Moreover, in many places the community pharmacy is the only primary healthcare unit, and the only place where advice can be obtained from a health care professional. With the changing needs of health systems and the public, the pharmacy profession needs to continue to evolve with the support of technology, education and, importantly, your support in legislation.

Thank you for your attention.

¹ EB144/13