

Intervention on provisional agenda item 5.7 Medicines, vaccines and health products - Access to medicines and vaccines

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.

Access to vaccines can only be improved if a life-course approach to vaccination is promoted through strong efforts from all immunisation stakeholders. According to the WHO, an additional 1.5 million lives could be saved annually if coverage was increased for many of the 26 diseases that can be effectively prevented through vaccination.

The role of pharmacists as immunisers was recognised in the 2011 FIP-WHO Guidelines on Good Pharmacy Practice. With adequate training, community pharmacists are perfectly competent to perform a series of roles that can significantly contribute to improving vaccination coverage, from providing evidence-based advice on vaccines, to administering vaccines and managing vaccination records. Pharmacists in most countries are highly accessible and trusted healthcare professionals, providing convenient access to health care services at any time, with no need for a prior appointment.

In addition, pharmacies and pharmacists offer the infrastructure, logistics and expertise to manage the safe storage and distribution of vaccines.

According to FIP data, there is a consolidated global trend towards pharmacists having the authority to vaccinate and their vaccine-related roles are expanding at an increased pace. Yet several barriers to these roles remain a challenge in several countries. These include regulatory obstacles, opposition by other health professions, and lack of appropriate incentives and remuneration for a public health service that clearly generates savings for patients and health systems. FIP has continually made advocacy efforts to expand the roles of pharmacists related to vaccination promotion and administration at global, regional and national levels.

Importantly, access to medicines and vaccines should be connected to access to pharmaceutical expertise in order to ensure their safe and responsible use.

Thank you for your attention.
(298 words)