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**Pharmacy Care and Pharmaceutical
Services: a High-level Policy Symposium**
24th September 2024
Copenhagen, Denmark and online

8 July 2024

Original: English

Scope and Purpose

I. Background

The acute workforce crisis, which hit the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, is not over yet. This calls for urgent systemic action across the major policy dimensions including performance optimisation. At the health systems level this implies rethinking the traditional roles of healthcare professionals, tighter collaboration, investments into infrastructure, technical and IT tools, and consumables. The crisis prompted health policy makers and vertical programme managers to turn to non-health professionals, encouraging volunteers and community workers to assume some health-related functions. At the same time, the potential of a sizable category of healthcare professionals, pharmacists, remains largely untapped and this is despite the important and in some areas critical role community pharmacists played for bringing the COVID-19 crisis under control, including information dissemination, patient counselling, in-pharmacy testing, vaccination, and post-vaccination patient support.

Following the publication of WHO Regional Office's report *Health and care workforce in Europe: time to act*, which revealed labour market dynamics, pinpointed key challenges, and charted the way for their resolution, a number of milestone documents were adopted to facilitate urgent response to the workforce crises. They include the *Bucharest Declaration on the health and care workforce* adopted on 23rd March 2023 in Rumania and the *Framework for action on the health and care workforce in the WHO European Region 2023–2030* voted for at the 73rd session of the WHO Regional Committee in Astana, Kazakhstan. These documents highlight *inter alia* the need for the adequate re-distribution of tasks between categories of health and care professionals to make healthcare services more available and affordable for individuals and communities without any compromise to their quality. This is in line with the WHO-Europe programme of work, which encourages prioritisation of the workforce strengthening and access to medicines to speed up attainment of the Universal Health Coverage.

What can and should pharmacists contribute to healthcare delivery and how do these roles dovetail into the multi-disciplinary approach to health in the hospital and community settings? These topics will be covered at the high-level policy symposium organised jointly with the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) in the run-up to the celebration of the 2024 World Pharmacists Day.

II. Activity

The high-level policy symposium will bring together policy makers and representatives of the professional communities of pharmacists to address the following objectives:

- Outline good practices in the expanded roles pharmacists are assuming across the region to offer pharmacy care and pharmaceutical services, which go beyond traditional supply and dispensing of medical products;
- Raise awareness of the key contributions of pharmacists to improving patient care and health systems performance across the European region;
- Highlight the role of pharmacists in the rational use of medicines, vaccination, preventing AMR, managing chronic conditions and minor ailments thereby reducing the burden of other health professionals.

It will be a hybrid event, which will include key-note addresses, face-to-face discussions, presentations and streaming for the benefit of the online participants from the UN City, Copenhagen, Denmark on 24th September 2024. It will be accompanied by a thematic exhibition organised in Copenhagen and the launch of the WHO-Europe report *Community pharmacy regulatory and practice models in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*.

III. Expected Outputs and Deliverables

- Awareness of the roles of pharmacists in healthcare delivery is increased;
- Good practices are highlighted and the information about them is disseminated across the region empowering the Member States for their adaptation and adoption;
- Roles of policy makers and the professional community are brought to the fore.

Provisional Programme

Where: WHO Europe Office, Copenhagen, Denmark (UN City), Pacific Ocean Lounge.

When: Wednesday, 24th September 2024, 15.30 CET.

Format: mixed - in person in CPH and streamed online

With simultaneous interpretation into Russian,

Zoom session starts at 15:00 to allow participants to connect in advance.

Event facilitator: Mr Stanislav Kniazkov, Technical Officer, Pricing and. Reimbursement, WHO Europe

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| 15:30 | Opening Remarks Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe (recording). |
| 15:35 | Keynote Addresses Mr Stephen Donnelly, Minister for Health, Republic of Ireland (TBC), Prof. Ana Paula Martins, Minister of Health of Portugal, Mr Luís Lourenço, FIP's Professional Secretary, Portugal. |
| 16:10 | Health Workforce in the WHO European Region: Strengths and Challenges Dr Tomas Zapata, Regional Advisor, Health Workforce and Service Delivery, WHO Europe |
| 16:25 | Patient-centric pharmacy in the modern healthcare system Mr Stanislav Kniazkov, Technical Officer, Pricing and. Reimbursement, WHO Europe |
| 16:40 | Best Practices of Pharmacists' Services from across the European Region Moderated panel discussion. Moderator: Dr Catherine Duggan, CEO, FIP Panel members: Mr Stephen Donnelly, Minister for Health, Republic of Ireland (TBC), Prof. Ana Paula Martins, Minister of Health of Portugal, Mr Daragh Connolly, Chair of the FIP Board of Pharmaceutical Practice, Ireland, Mr Rob Moss, FIP Vice president, the Netherlands, Dr Tomas Zapata, Regional Advisor, Health Workforce and Service Delivery, WHO Europe. Covering the following topics: <i>Advancing the rational, safe, and cost-effective use of medicines in hospitals and the community;</i> <i>Improving vaccine confidence, delivery, and uptake;</i> <i>Empowering self-care and managing common ailments in the community: providing timely care and reducing pressure on GPs and emergency departments;</i> <i>Curbing AMR through appropriate antimicrobial stewardship;</i> <i>Preventing, screening, and managing chronic non-communicable diseases in the community.</i> |
| 17:20 | Conclusions and Closing Remarks Mr Daragh Connolly, Chair of the FIP Board of Pharmaceutical Practice, Ireland, Dr Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, Director, Division of Country Health Policies and Systems, WHO Europe. |