

Join “Think Health, Think Pharmacy” — A global campaign to raise awareness of pharmacies as places of primary health care provision

22 May 2024, Supporting Statement from the FIP Bureau

Pharmacists and pharmacies make crucial contributions to supporting “Health for all”. A wide range of health services in addition to medicines supply and health advice are now being provided in pharmacies.¹ Examples include: medicines use review; disease prevention; testing for high cholesterol, COVID-19 or HIV; “test and treat”; vaccination, minor ailments and self-care; prescribing; management of non-communicable diseases such as asthma, diabetes and hypertension; smoking cessation; short-course treatment of tuberculosis and urinary tract infections; management of anticoagulation; opioid substitution; and health promotion. Many policymakers and members of the public now recognise pharmacies as places of essential healthcare provision, but too many still see them primarily as commercial enterprises, despite recent advances in pharmacy practice.

Primary health care is key to achieving health for all. Through the Declaration of Astana in 2018, governments recommitted to strengthening primary health care as a way to achieve universal health coverage and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) attended the Global Conference on Primary Health Care in Astana, Kazakhstan, and was a signatory to the declaration. Since then, our federation has worked to strengthen pharmacy’s contribution to, and impact on, primary health care. There is extensive evidence that pharmacists (also referred to as “chemists” or “pharmaceutical chemists” in some regions of the world) have the necessary expertise, and are the most accessible primary health care providers. We are convinced that it is through the pharmacy profession that much progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 3 (“good health and well-being for all”) will be made.

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The United Nations uses density of pharmacists as a measure of progress on indicator 3.c.1 (“health worker density and distribution”) for Sustainable Development Goal target 3.c.² A number of other major stakeholders in global health also recognise pharmacists as healthcare professionals:

- The International Labour Organization classifies pharmacists as health professionals.³
- The World Health Organization says “community pharmacists are the health professionals most accessible to the public and are a cornerstone of primary health care”, and that the role of community pharmacists is expanding globally.⁴
- As recommended by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development,⁵ many countries have introduced changes to legislation to expand the role of pharmacists to relieve pressure on the rest of the healthcare system.

Nevertheless, our pharmacy profession needs universal recognition of its unique place in primary health care. There are several reasons for this:

1. **Enhanced patient care** Recognising pharmacies as integral to primary health care ensures that pharmacists can fully utilise their expertise, leading to improved patient outcomes.
2. **Accessibility** Pharmacies offer extended opening hours and walk-in services. Recognition of their role can increase public access to essential health services.
3. **Collaboration** Acknowledging pharmacists as key healthcare providers fosters better collaboration among healthcare professionals and a more coordinated care experience for patients.
4. **Healthcare cost reduction** Recognising that pharmacies help reduce healthcare costs (e.g., through managing chronic conditions and minimising medication errors) can lead to cost savings and better resource allocation.

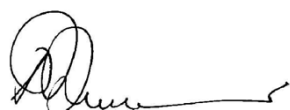
5. **Professional growth** Universal recognition enhances the professional status of pharmacists, attracting more talent to the field, encouraging continuous professional development, and supporting expanded scope of practice.
6. **Policy and advocacy** Recognition by policymakers can lead to legislation and policies empowering pharmacists to practise to the full extent of their training.

Universal recognition of the pharmacy profession's role in primary health care can lead to a more effective, efficient, and patient-centred healthcare system. We need policymakers to think universal pharmacy coverage when they think about universal health coverage.

FIP's global "Think Health, Think Pharmacy" campaign is an important strategy to achieve this goal, which is aligned with [FIP's vision](#). The [campaign webpage](#) provides evidence of the primary health care actions and impacts of our profession along with other campaign assets. We encourage all pharmacists and pharmacy organisations, particularly members of FIP, to join us in supporting this campaign.

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Mr Paul Sinclair (Australia)
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Duggan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Catherine Duggan (Netherlands)
Chief executive officer

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Mr Luís Lourenço (Portugal)
Professional secretary

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Scientific secretary

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Dr Naoko Arakawa (UK)
Interim FIP Education secretary

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Mr Daragh Connolly (Ireland)
Chair of the Board of Pharmaceutical
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Prof. Ross McKinnon (Australia)
Chair of the Board of
Pharmaceutical Sciences



Prof. Ralph Altieri (USA)
Chair of FIP Education



Prof. Parisa Aslani (Australia)
Vice president



Ms Manjiri Gharat (India)
Vice president



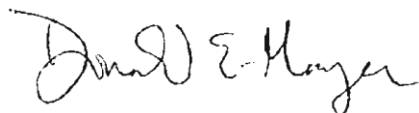
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Prof. Donald E. Mager (USA)
Acting vice president



Dr Virginia Olmos (Uruguay)
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Mr Lars-Åke Söderlund (Sweden)
Vice president

References

- 1) International Pharmaceutical Federation. Pharmacy at a glance 2015-2017. The Hague 2017. Available at: www.fip.org/file/1348
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- 3) International Labour Organization. International Standard Classification of Occupations (ICSO-08). Geneva 2012. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3iwl7Yi>
- 4) World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. The legal and regulatory framework for community pharmacies in the WHO European Region. 2019. Available at <https://bit.ly/3LcsKjZ>
- 5) Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Strengthening the frontline: How primary health care helps systems adapt during the COVID-19 pandemic. Paris 2021. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3wJKejE>