

FIP CALL TO ACTION TO EXPAND THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY PHARMACIES IN VACCINATION, INCLUDING AGAINST COVID-19 AND FUTURE PANDEMICS

The Hague, 25 September 2020

Vaccination is one of the most successful and cost-effective health interventions of all time, second only to clean water, according to the WHO.^{1,2}

Community pharmacies are often the first point of contact with the health system. Not only are they staffed with a highly-skilled workforce, but they are also trusted, convenient health facilities embedded at the heart of communities with appropriate infrastructure and logistics to ensure the adequate storage and distribution of medicines, including those that require strict cold-chain management.

Pharmacies offer an essential public service and can be a key partner in primary health care and disease prevention strategies, in full coordination with health systems and other health professions.

In addition, community pharmacies are increasingly involved in vaccination promotion and delivery. According to [FIP data from 2020](#), in at least 86 countries pharmacies play a variety of roles in vaccination advocacy, awareness and advice, and in at least 36 countries they play an active role in administering vaccinations, while this has been proposed or is undergoing development in a further 16. One of the key levers for increasing vaccination rates across people's life-course is to increase convenience of access³ and it is not difficult to see the significant role pharmacy can play in this.

In the face of the current COVID-19 pandemic and in preparation for future pandemics, it is imperative for all countries to expand their vaccination pathways in order to achieve high vaccination coverage and collective immunity as quickly as possible. Also, out of equity in access to disease prevention measures, and to ensure the highest possible level of quality of life and function at all stages of life and gain the full health and economic benefits from vaccination, it is an ethical and public health imperative to expand vaccination schedules and strategies beyond infancy and across all ages, through the diversification of vaccination pathways, especially for adults.

A healthy population is essential for the growth of economies and vaccinations should form the foundations of public health programmes if countries are to reach their full potential.

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The economic benefits of vaccinations against 10 diseases in 73 low and middle-income countries between 2011 and 2020 through an increase in productivity is estimated at US\$251.4bn⁴.

Vaccination improves productivity, increases healthy life expectancy and reduces long-term disability. At another level, vaccination helps to improve access to education by ensuring that children are not prevented from accessing education due to ill health or disability and through a reduction in school days lost due to self-limiting illness. Also, vaccines deliver immense value by curbing antimicrobial resistance by reducing the circulation of sensitive and resistant pathogens and, as a result, by reducing the use of antimicrobials.^{5,6}

The WHO makes the case for access to vaccinations to be considered a basic human right by countries and individuals, such is their importance in the prevention of disease and ill health. The benefits of vaccination spread far further than keeping a vaccinated individual healthy. The impact of a successful vaccination programme can improve the health of the whole population through both direct and indirect impacts.

Vaccination can help reduce healthcare costs, allow health budgets to be spent in other areas, and promote the economic success of countries by having a healthier population who are more economically productive.

In summary, vaccination is one of the cornerstones of any equitable and cost-effective health system across the globe.⁷

Considering the above, the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), which represents over 140 national pharmacy organisations around the world, calls on governments and other stakeholders to:

1. Recognise and fully harness the potential and convenience of community pharmacies for public health, primary healthcare and disease prevention strategies, including vaccination.
2. Foster the full integration of community pharmacies in healthcare systems, by creating the regulatory and operational conditions for interprofessional collaboration, including access to shared patient health records and vaccination records.
3. Expand the regulatory scope of practice of appropriately trained and certified pharmacists to authorise them to administer a broad range of vaccines beyond infancy.
4. Promote the competence of pharmacists in vaccine administration through the development of the required knowledge and skills as an integral part of pharmacists' foundational education and training, and/or through continuing professional development opportunities.
5. Invest in prevention strategies, including vaccines and vaccination services by all providers, including pharmacists, to ensure equity in access to vaccinations and the sustainability of the service.
6. Ensure health system readiness for mass immunisation against COVID-19 and any future pandemics as soon as vaccines are available.
7. Include pharmacists in emergency preparedness and response plans as frontline health workers.



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The above measures are urgently needed to ensure equitable access to vaccines and vaccination services to all people around the world, across all ages and leaving no-one behind, to reduce the burden of vaccine-preventable diseases, and so that pharmacists can play an even greater part in the fight against COVID-19 and any future pandemics.

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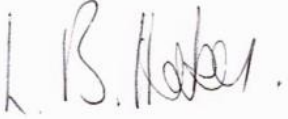
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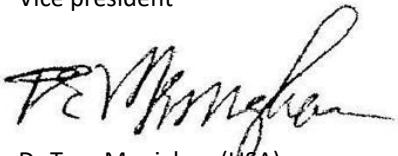
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