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Vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization: realizing the full potential of the European Vaccine Action Plan 2015–2020

Honorable chair, distinguished delegates,

It is a great honour to speak on behalf of the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF), representing over 350,000 pharmaceutical students and recent graduates in 90 countries worldwide.

IPSF supports the vision of an European region free of vaccine-preventable diseases, where countries provide equitable access to high-quality, safe, affordable vaccines and immunization services throughout the life course.

The role of pharmacists as immunizers is expanding, with convenience playing a large part in the growing public acceptance of pharmacy immunisation services, addressing immunisation coverage for preventable diseases. In the England between 2016-17, community pharmacists administered almost one million flu vaccinations to adults at risk through the National Health Service's scheme, an increase of 60% from the previous year.

Pharmacists play a vital role in prevention through disease, as well as vaccine administration to the public, representing the safest, more efficient and cost-effective measures for preventing, controlling and eradicating life-threatening infectious diseases. Due to this proximity to the public, pharmacists are empowered to actively contribute to patient safety and to the development of safer vaccines.

IPSF is committed to contributing to the public health response to immunization by planning and executing awareness campaigns that reach communities worldwide. Through various activities, such campaigns can help change the public perception and their attitudes on the value of immunisation services and vaccines, contributing to the equitable expanding of immunisation and stimulating demand among all population groups.

Finally, as the voice of pharmacy students worldwide, we call upon member states to encourage the inclusion of vaccine administration as part of the undergraduate pharmacy curriculum to further enable pharmacists to play their part in immunisation coverage from their first day of practice.

Thank you for your attention.

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