



EAHP and GS1 team up to advance patient safety in Europe

*Promoting global coding standards for medical products
to improve hospital pharmacy processes*

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BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 7 September 2010 - The European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) and GS1 have announced today that they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate in promoting patient safety.

“In hospitals, personalised treatments are prepared in the pharmacy or ward, and administered by nurses to the patients. A complete and unambiguous identification of the drug, up to the moment of administration, is a key element of a safe dispensing procedure when drugs are dispensed,” said Roberto Frontini, President, European Association Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP). “We encourage the adoption and harmonisation of GS1 Standards in Europe to enable the effective and efficient implementation of bar codes on all packages of drugs.”

“This agreement is an important step in improving patient safety and Healthcare supply chain processes. Hospital pharmacists will now be more closely involved in the development and implementation of global standards to bar code medical products and automate supply chain data management,” said Bo Raattamaa, Chair GS1 in Europe and CEO GS1 Sweden, “This collaboration will allow the two organisations to combine their respective expertise and outreach to the Healthcare community in support of an improved European patient safety environment.”

“For several years now, EAHP has been looking into their requirements for bar coding of medical products. We are looking forward to contribute to the GS1 Standards development process,” added Frontini, “Bar coded medical products, enabled by global standards, will not only make our hospital processes more efficient, but will positively impact patient safety by reducing medication errors.”

EAHP issued a position statement in June 2007 (updated June 2010) advocating the production of single dose-packed drugs with a bar code on each single dose (www.eahp.eu/Advocacy/Bar-coded-unit-doses/EAHP-statement-June-2010). To achieve this, EAHP strongly recommends the use of Internationally recognised GS1 Standards. This will allow hospitals to improve the efficiency of the dispensing process and, more importantly, ensure a safer process; preliminary studies have suggested a 50 to 80% reduction of administration errors when bar coded drugs are scanned at the bedside.

Earlier this year, GS1 Healthcare published the GS1 Standard for the Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC) of medical products

(www.gs1.org/sites/default/files/docs/media_centre/gs1_pr_210110_healthcare_AIDC_Application_Standards.pdf).

This voluntary standard provides industry stakeholders with a common set of data and data carriers for medical products at every packaging level, including specific guidance on selection and use of appropriate product Identification Keys, additional product and production data (or example; lot number, expiration date, and/or serial number [where applicable]), and data carriers (linear bar codes, two-dimensional data matrix bar codes and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags). A new GS1 Healthcare work group will now look into additional requirements for unit-dose marking.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

About EAHP

The European Association of Hospital Pharmacists is a Federation of national associations of hospital pharmacists. Its European membership includes more than 21,000 professionals. EAHP's aim is to establish a common pharmaceutical policy in Europe. It represents the interest of the profession at the European level, contributes to the scientific development of hospital pharmacy and to the advancement of the position and role of the pharmacists in hospitals.

About GS1 and GS1 Healthcare

GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the design and implementation of global standards and solutions to improve the efficiency and visibility in supply chains. GS1 is driven by more than a million companies, who execute more than six billion transactions a day with the GS1 System of Standards. GS1 is truly global, with Member Organisations in over 100 countries, with the Global Office in Brussels, Belgium.

GS1 Healthcare is a global, voluntary Healthcare user group developing global standards for the Healthcare supply chain and advancing global harmonisation.

For more information visit: www.gs1.org/healthcare.

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