

EFPIA Patient Think Tank – Issue Summary March 2014

EFPIA's Patient Think Tank serves as a forum for both EFPIA members and European patients' organisations to come together in an active forum to discuss how industry can best meet patient needs. Following each meeting, an issue summary is posted on the EFPIA website. Below is the issue summary of March 2014.

Health & Growth

EFPIA presented the Patient Think Tank (PTT) with a detailed overview of its Health & Growth strategy, including six policy priority areas designed to move ahead the H&G agenda towards a comprehensive EU life sciences strategy. Through this strategy, EFPIA's aims to find sustainable solutions that balance the needs of innovation, financial stability and access to care.

Of especial interests to patients is H&G's efforts to address health inequalities and health outcomes. EFPIA sees the first as being pivotal to achieving a more equitable level of access to healthcare in Europe, while capturing better data on the second will contribute to improving the efficiency of healthcare.

In the discussion that followed, it became clear that there is already a lot of alignment across the PTT membership regarding health inequalities, as there is on concerns about the negative policies being imposed on member states through the European semester process. The PTT would benefit from knowledge-sharing on the European Semester process.

We are at a decision point regarding whether Europe aligns around the concept of minimum standards to preserve budgets or with the more ambitious agenda being advanced internationally by WHO and others. The economic and social cost of morbidity is the key argument.

Patient representatives flagged the fact that the H&G project did not fully recognize the ways in which patient organizations contribute to drug development and science. This led to a discussion of public perceptions of the innovation process and the extent to which there is awareness of the increased role of patients. The industry should consider whether a better understanding of the social nature of innovation would have a positive effect on European ambivalence towards science.

Exchanges with EFPIA Leadership

EFPIA leadership, including Director General Richard Bergström, joined the meeting to help identify ways of elevating the profile and contributions of the PTT. It was generally acknowledged that there is a general movement across European institutions to more systematically include the voice of patients in decision-making. The question then is: What are the top three things that the PTT can contribute - and what are the measurable milestones?

Health

- Benefit/Risk Models are of major importance in determining whether patients have access to new medicines and in shaping industry development programmes.
- Healthcare outcomes should be shaping decision-making, rather than short-term resource and budget control. The US is ahead in having an integrated approach. How can the EU do better?

Access

- Coverage Gaps are emerging in the EU. We need a more flexible basis for pricing in Europe – i.e. for countries like Greece. The US is ahead on this, where different purchasers pay different prices
- Approval Delays are well-known problem in the EU. At the same time, as we move into the debate on early access, there needs to be a discussion about people's expectations about these new approaches to access..

Innovation

- Unmet Need could be more central to the discussion on innovation. It is clear that we need a pathway for greater patient involvement in R&D, but this requires reflection. The idea of initiating a cascade through the EFPIA structures is good but what is the best way to interact?

Other Topics Covered

- Industry's changing purpose in working with patients – what drives industry-patient interaction, in the past and in the present? How should this relationship be molded in the future?
- Patient-industry dialogue at EU versus at individual Member State level.
- Differences in patient-industry collaboration in the US versus EU
- Translational research was suggested as a key area for development.
- Boosting PTT transparency to external audiences.
- Benchmarking best practice in patient-industry relations.
- Patient involvement in medical conferences.

Full copies of EFPIA Patient Think Tank meeting reports are available from EFPIA, upon request: communications@efpia.eu