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European supply chain actors zoom in on solutions to medicine shortages with 4 thematic events

Over the past seven weeks, an industry group comprised of GIRP, EAHP, PGEU and AME hosted a series of four thematic virtual events on the topic of finding solutions to medicine shortages in Europe. The subject of each event varied so that a broad discussion could be achieved. The topics of the four events included prevention, response plans, and risk assessments; monitoring; shortages at community pharmacies; and the diversification of medicine production.

Background

It is clear that in the European Union, medicine shortages are posing an ever more serious problem. In the most direct way, shortages mean that anyone living on this continent could one day face a time when he or she cannot access important medicine. At Affordable Medicines Europe, we believe that if this problem is left untreated in the long-term, it could result in serious issues for public health on our continent. Rather than focus on the problem, we believe in seeking solutions, which is why the goal of these events was to zoom in on the best **ideas** stakeholders from government, industry, and the public sector could propose. It is also why at these events, we hosted a broad and diverse group of speakers from all sectors of society.

“This series contributed to the development of solutions to the problem of medicine shortages, both from the perspective of policy and the current legal framework as well as industry,” said Kasper Ernest, the Secretary General of Affordable Medicines Europe.

Key Takeaways

The four events yielded some excellent discussions, ideas, and follow-up points, such as:

- The importance of finding a bottom-up approach with a system of signals to catch potential shortages as soon as possible from everyone along the supply chain.
- The importance of collaboration with EU institutions, so that reporting can be harmonized across Europe.
- The importance of risk assessments and response plans as tools to proactively address medicine shortages. Furthermore, policymakers, the public sector, and industry should work together to increase the reach of them.
- Instead of spending hours dealing with shortages, pharmacists should be able to do what they are meant to do: to provide high quality care to their patients. Furthermore, pharmacies should continue to be involved in the monitoring and reporting of shortages, though it is also important that they themselves receive timely information on shortages so they can do their work effectively.

Affordable Medicines Europe would like to thank all the participants for taking the time to discuss and seek solutions for this essential challenge. We would also like to thank our hosts, GIRP, EAHP and PGEU. For more information about this series of events, please do not hesitate to read a short summary of each event [here](#) or contact Kasper Ernest of Affordable Medicines Europe by way of the information provided above.

Affordable Medicines Europe represents Europe's licensed parallel distribution industry, an integral part of the European pharmaceutical market that adds value to society by introducing price competition for patented medicines and a supplementary layer of product safety. We represent 120 companies in 23 EU/EEA Member States. These members account for approximately 80% of the total parallel import market volume in the EU/EEA. Membership in the EAEPIC is exclusive to companies holding a wholesale (GDP) license (export and import). All importing members furthermore are GMP licensed.

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