

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The European Patients' Forum and Health Partners Join Forces For EU Action on Patient Empowerment

Brussels, 21 May 2015 – On 20-21 May 2015, over 150 patient leaders, health professionals, NGO representatives, researchers and policy-makers gathered in Brussels to explore the role of patient empowerment in building high-quality equitable, sustainable health systems in Europe.

With this two-day event, the European Patients' Forum (EPF) marked the official launch of a major one-year campaign on Patient Empowerment. EPF will work in concert with the health community to take the European discussions on this topic a crucial next step forward, towards concrete actions.

Speakers, both experts and patients, presented the evidence-base on patient empowerment and inspirational case studies. Participants discussed the challenges of making empowerment a reality for all patients and how it can be integrated into a future EU approach to measuring healthcare quality. Interactive workshops delved in-depth into three key aspects of empowerment: health literacy, shared decision-making, and self-management.

"Patients with chronic conditions are often referred to as the most under-used resource in the health system while patient-centred care models have demonstrated better quality of care as well as potential long-term cost-efficiencies. Too many patients are still struggling to get the support they need to become equal partners in care. To make real progress, we need to make patient empowerment a priority, starting with the development of an EU-wide strategy and action plan", said EPF President, Anders Olauson.

#PatientsprescribE

"Patients prescribe E5 for sustainable health systems" is the tagline of the EPF campaign to demonstrate that patients are active people who can, if supported and according to their individual capabilities and situation, make a difference for the sustainability of healthcare systems. The five "E" of Empowerment stand for:

- **Education:** patients can make informed decisions about their health if they are able to access all the relevant information, in an easily understandable format.
- **Expertise:** patients self-manage their condition every day so they have a unique expertise on healthcare which needs to be supported.
- **Equality:** patients need support to become equal partners with health professionals in the management of their condition.
- **Experience:** individual patients work with patient organisations to represent them, and channel their experience and collective voice.

- **Engagement:** patients need to be involved in designing more effective healthcare for all, and in research to deliver new and better treatments and services.

The need to promote understanding of what patient empowerment means from the patient perspective among political decision-makers and health stakeholders emerged from the conference. The outcomes of the meeting will therefore contribute to the development of a Charter of Patient Empowerment and a multi-stakeholder Roadmap for Action to be released in November 2015.

A joint campaign led by patients

Key health stakeholders – including representative organisations of doctors, nurses and pharmacists – joined EPF in calling for action on patient empowerment:

“Patients are what unites doctors in Europe and patient empowerment is the credo of what is needed in this age: capability needs to match the challenges and opportunities of modern health care systems. Empowered patients are well-informed patients, health literate patients and last but not least patients who take responsibility for their health and work in partnership with doctors. There is an ever more urgent need to tackle demographic challenges and chronic conditions and action is needed to empower patients in managing these. CPME supports actions that ensure patient access, health literacy, health promotion and serve the needs of the patients while respecting the autonomy of physicians and their valuable role in the provision of healthcare.” - Dr Katrín Fjeldsted, Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME).



“We as Medical Students strongly support Patient Empowerment, because the patients expertise and experience are very important to the therapy process” - Pascal Nohl-Deryk
European Medical Students' Association (EMSA)



“The focus for all health professionals, including of course pharmacists, needs to be on patients. That means recognising that patients have their own voice, and that patient autonomy and empowerment are an essential part both of more responsive health services, and more effective and efficient care” – John Chave, Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU)



“Informed patients make informed – and often different – decisions. To actively invite them to be part of a shared decision-making is a first important step when we want a healthcare system that respects patients’ values and preferences” – Beth Lilja, CEO, Danish Society for Patient Safety.



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About EPF

The **European Patients' Forum (EPF)** was founded in 2003 to ensure that the patients' community drives policies and programmes that affect patients' lives to bring changes empowering them to be equal citizens in the EU.

EPF currently represents 65 members, which are national coalitions of patient organisations and disease-specific patient organisations working at European level, and. EPF reflects the voice of an estimated 150 million patients affected by various chronic diseases throughout Europe.

EPF's vision for the future is that all patients with chronic and/or lifelong conditions in the EU have access to high quality, patient-centred equitable health and social care.


The EPF strategic goals focus on areas such as health literacy, healthcare design and delivery, patient involvement, patient empowerment, sustainable patients' organisations and non-discrimination.


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