Published on *European Association of Hospital Pharmacists* (https://www.eahp.eu)

European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP)

Consultation Response to DG Connect's

mHealth Green Paper

June 2014

Getting mHealth right – learning from experience

The European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) has responded to **a consultation by the European Commission** [2] advising that any mHealth applications linked to the use of medicines must have levels of regulatory oversight, ideally involving pharmacist expertise, in order to ensure their safety.

The European Commission launched a consultation on mHealth in April 2014, asking healthcare professionals and patients for input on the health related applications of smartphone technology. One of EAHP's key points was that the introduction of new technologies in the hospital setting has been an ever-present reality. Lessons learned include the need to understand the potential positive applications of a new technology at an early stage, and for Governments and health system managers to take a leadership role in achieving their realisation. This lesson, for example, is evident in the difficulties experienced in achieving **bedside scanning** [3] as a patient safety measure within hospital systems - as medicines still do not typically contain a bar code to the single unit.

Another key point of EAHP's response was to underline safety needs when applying mHealth to any process involving medicines.

Dr Roberto Frontini, President of the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists, said:

"The implications of a badly designed mHealth application related to medicines use is frightening. All medicines can potentially cause harm if not taken properly. Therefore, when it comes to mHealth apps and medicines, a level of regulatory oversight is required. We recommend pharmacists be involved in both development and testing of such applications. Indeed, the need for such pharmacist involvement in ICT processes involving medicines was a strong component of the recently published **European Statements of Hospital Pharmacy** [4]*, agreed with patient organisations and other healthcare professionals.*

Beyond this, we urge the European Commission to learn lessons of experience. Technology can offer so much. However, without both vision to see potential positive applications, and subsequent coordination, too often the benefits are not realised. We see this, for example, with our ongoing campaign to achieve bedside scanning of medicines in hospitals. Barriers and obstacles have to be identified and lifted. There is an important coordinating role for the Commission in this regard.

Finally, we urge the Commission not to think about mHealth as only having cost-saving benefits. Improved patient safety and patient outcomes must be considered as just as important, if not more so."

The consultation [2] remains open until the end of Thursday 10th July. The response of the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists is available **here.** [1]

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For further information contact info[at]eahp[dot]eu [5] 00 322 741 6835

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) is an association of national organisations across 34 countries representing hospital pharmacists at European and

international levels. More information about the EAHP and its history **here** [6]**.**

2. More details about the European Commission's consultation are available **here** [2]**.** The response of EAHP is available **here** [7]**.**

3. More details about bedside scanning of medicines in hospitals, its patient safety benefits, and the need to achieve bar coding of medicines to the single unit to realise wider take-up, are available **here** [8]**.**

4. Statement 1.7 of the **European Statements of Hospital Pharmacy** [9] states: *"Hospital pharmacists must be involved in the design, specification of parameters and evaluation of ICT within the medicine processes. This will ensure that pharmacy services are integrated within the general Information and Communication Technology (ICT) framework of the hospital including electronic health (eHealth) and mobile health (mHealth) procedures."*

5. Requests for interviews with Dr Roberto Frontini and national spokespersons for EAHP country member associations on the topic of mHealth (or other subjects) can be made by contacting info[at]eahp[dot]eu [5]

8 July 2014

Links
[1] http://www.eahp.eu/sites/default/files/files/EAHP%20Consultation%20on%20mHealth_3July14.pdf [2] http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/public-consultation-green-paper-mobile-health [3] http://www.eahp.eu/practice-and-policy/bar-coding-medicines-to-the-single-unit# [4] http://www.eahp.eu/events/european-summit/summit-documents [5] https://www.eahp.eu/contact/info/eahp/eu [6] http://www.eahp.eu/about-us [7] https://www.eahp.eu/sites/default/files/files/EAHP%20Consultation%20on%20mHealth_3July14.pdf [8] http://www.eahp.eu/practice-and-policy/bar-coding-medicines-to-the-single-unit [9] http://www.eahp.eu/sites/default/files/files/European Statements of Hospital Pharmacy.pdf