

Press release

European pharmaceutical wholesalers focus Annual Conference on collaborative partnerships with the industry as a “value” chain management reality

Belgrade, Serbia, 8th June 2015 – The 56th Annual Meeting and Conference of the European Association of Pharmaceutical Full-line Wholesalers (GIRP) is currently underway in Belgrade, Serbia.

This year, the major annual meeting of Europe's pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers is concentrating on collaborative partnerships in the pharmaceutical “value” chain management. In particular, the focus is on those important existing and evolving relationships between the pharma industry and integrated pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers. Speaking at the event, René Jenny, GIRP President, stressed that “pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers are no longer considered as ‘box movers’; the role and function of pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers has become much more sophisticated. The discussions at the Annual Meeting and Conference are a testament to the importance of services as a growing development, and we are excited about the road ahead in terms of what this will mean for our members, the industry, patients and also healthcare funders – all of which will clearly benefit from the collaboration in the supply chain.”

The GIRP Director-General, Monika Derecque-Pois explained, “we are not only concerned about delivering pharmaceutical products, we are also focused on creating and offering tailored services that support the delivery of products so that patients can achieve better healthcare outcomes”. She further explained that partnerships are a dominant and re-occurring theme in today's pharmaceutical supply chain. “The relationship between the industry and integrated pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers is clearly evolving, as integrated pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers no longer regard the pharma industry as suppliers of products, but as clients for services. The development of tailored support services at key moments in the product life-cycle is something that is here to stay and that will be a dominant trend in our sector in the foreseeable future.”

We are increasingly seeing a move away from a transactional relationship to a strategic partnership between integrated pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers and the industry. During his keynote address, Oliver Windholz, Chief Executive Officer, PHOENIX Group, highlighted how the collaboration with the industry is delivering a win-win situation. Collaboration with pharmaceutical manufacturers is resulting in higher sales volumes, better insights into mutually beneficial models, cost saving synergies, fewer stock-outs and productivity gains along the entire distribution chain. As the head of one of Europe's largest pharmaceutical wholesalers, he explained that he regards these developments “as a collaborative relationship which is part of a ‘value chain management’ proposition and needs to be seen beyond ‘supply chain management’”.

Industry speakers echoed these perspectives, taking the overall view that there is a real value proposition in collaborating with integrated pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers. Industry executives outlined their views on collaborative areas ranging from support throughout a product's life-cycle development to vendor managed inventory, to logistics and patients' needs, to retail pharmacy initiatives, such as ‘optimized pharmacy replenishment’ systems.

Speaking during the event, Monika Derecque-Pois was delighted to announce that the theme of this event was no accident. During its General Assembly meeting prior to the conference, GIRP warmly welcomed five new members from the pharmaceutical industry. The new members will form a new class of membership dedicated to supporting the evolving relationship between pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers and the pharmaceutical industry. Derecque-Pois extended a very warm welcome to the new members from both the generic- and the research-based sides of the industry and hopes that this occasion will mark the beginning of a long lasting, sustainable and collaborative relationship, with patients being the ultimate beneficiaries of this development.

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The European Association of Pharmaceutical Full-line Wholesalers (GIRP)

European Association of Pharmaceutical Full-line Wholesalers (GIRP) is the umbrella organisation of pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers in Europe. It represents the national associations of over 750 pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers serving 32 European countries, including major Pan-European pharmaceutical full-line wholesaling companies.

Through their network of operational facilities, GIRP members employ about 140,000 people and serve over 170,000 pharmacies and other healthcare professionals dispensing medicines to the public. In the performance of their public service role, pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers absolutely guarantee the highest level of quality, integrity and excellence. GIRP members are the trusted supply chain partners of manufacturers, pharmacists, healthcare professionals and, above all, patients, guaranteeing medicines' safety.