**How will the future pharmacy workforce look? Have your say!**

STANDFIRST>>>>>>

The World Health Organization and World Bank Group recently predicted that 40 to 50 million new health and social care workers are needed if “universal health coverage” is to be achieved — greater than all previous projections. A meeting of minds in Nanjing, China, is set to create a global vision for pharmacy education and workforce. Later this year, FIP will hold a unique international meeting: the Global Conference on Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Education. Joana Carrasqueira explains why.

MAIN TEXT>>>>>>

To achieve universal health coverage to support the World Health Organization’s human resources for health strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals, it is critical that the pharmacy workforce is sufficient in number and qualified to promote and improve the development, distribution and responsible use of medicines. Pharmacists have to be accountable for improving patient outcomes and competent to deliver a full range of health services to address national challenges for global health. So says Phil Schneider, chair of the planning committee of FIP’s Global Conference on Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Education, a momentous event that will take place in Nanjing, China, in November.

Transforming and scaling up the pharmacy workforce is an essential component of achieving universal health coverage and promoting positive health outcomes. The FIP*Ed* “Global pharmacy workforce intelligence: Trends report” (2015) revealed an increase in workforce across all nations and regions. This is good news, but there are still many countries with an insufficient number of pharmacists and progress is inconsistent. In low-income countries in particular, the pharmacy workforce needs to be strengthened in order to improve overall capacity for delivering appropriate care and a broad range of pharmaceutical services. Moreover, there is a need to ensure that the pharmacy workforce practises according to the full capability of its skills and competencies, in a wide array of environments and in collaboration with multiple stakeholders in health care.

Pharmacists, through existing roles and new roles, need to advocate for more encompassing health systems that ensure population needs are met through access to multi-professional health care teams. We need to create and adopt a global shared vision for the profession that can guide country-level initiatives aimed at improving access to pharmaceutical expertise through workforce strengthening and development. And that requires a focus on education.

**Setting the agenda**

Pharmacy, through the leadership role of FIP, is the first health profession playing an active role in translating the WHO Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030, adopted in May 2016, into a professional context. In order to promote change in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, FIP will host the first Global Conference on Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Education, aiming to set future milestones for education and training.

This conference will make a significant contribution to improved global health outcomes by ensuring that the pharmacy workforce is appropriately educated and competent to close gaps in the development, distribution, and responsible use of medicines.

With this event FIP will set new and future ways of conducting policy development on education and pharmacy workforce on national levels, according to international models and best practices, leading to the adoption of a clear roadmap on which the international community can rely to advance education and training.

Leaders from practice, education and research should collaborate in workforce planning efforts on a national level to ensure that plans include adequate attention to the integration of pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists and pharmacy support roles to meet local health needs.

To inform future activities in the field of education in a workforce development context, FIP will lead the adoption of:

* A global vision for the workforce and workforce development (in the context of education and training);
* Workforce development goals to activate and give purpose to the workforce vision in order to frame and contextualise the future direction of the profession; and
* Professional statements on pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences education to share recommendations on the process of education, enhancing professional standards worldwide.

Unique in its format, the Global Conference on Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Education is a strategic, two-day conference creating an innovative environment in which international experts and leaders will adopt a vision to guide the future activities of the profession. Through a series of workshops it will establish the tools and information on how to translate the end products of the global conference into mechanisms applicable and meaningful at a national level.

Drafts of the global vision, workforce development goals and professional statements on pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences education are available for public consultation in order to reflect the voice of the profession. Every pharmacist is welcome to contribute in order to shape the future of pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences education and training.

>>>>>>>>BOX 1>>>>>>

**Public consultation**

There are 81 professional statements on pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences education up for discussion, including:

* Schools of pharmacy should demonstrate the opportunities and disciplines available to both pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists.
* There should be a fair balance in the budget [of a faculty] dedicated to both research and teaching.
* All faculty [members] should be involved in research activities, and should be assessed not only on their research activities but also on their teaching skills.

What do you think?

For more information or to take part in the public consultation, go to http://fip.org/nanjing2016/public\_consultation.

>>>>>>BOX 2>>>>>>>>>

**Global conference details**

Co-hosted by FIP and the Chinese Pharmaceutical Society, the Global Conference on Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Education, will take place on **7 and 8 November 2016,** in Nanjing, China. This seminal platform will establish dialogue and consensus among policymakers, education leaders and regulators **on how pharmaceutical workforce competence can be assured through education. For more information on the conference and how to register go to** <http://fip.org/nanjing2016/>**.**