



SPECIAL ISSUE CONTINUING THE FIGHT AGAINST FAKE MEDS!

Fight the Fakes Campaign Holds Second Partners Meeting in Geneva

On October 7th, the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) hosted the 2nd Fight the Fakes Partners Meeting at their Geneva, Switzerland headquarters. The meeting, presided over by IFPMA's Assistant Director General, Greg Perry, was attended (both in person and via teleconference) by campaign partners from across Europe and the United States (including members of IFPW's staff.)



Members of IFPMA, IFPW and Fight the Fakes Partner Organizations met in Geneva for the 2nd Partners Meeting

Several key takeaways arose from the day-long meeting, including: 1) Continued efforts to raise awareness and commitments to the campaign on an international level are needed. In particular, the concept of having an official World Health Assembly delegation and a flagship side event every year to assist in giving the Fight the Fakes campaign higher visibility, was welcomed by all partners so that the campaign could increase its global reach; and, 2) Increase visibility and engagement on a local level... partners were challenged with the task to explore their own networks for opportunities to organize activities and raise awareness on a grass roots level within their own organizations.

Additionally, there was a strong consensus among the partners that the branding of the Fight the Fakes campaign should remain as is, given its worldwide recognition already in place. It was agreed that the issue of substandard medicines should be included in the campaign's messaging, as ultimately both falsified and substandard medicines pose significant harm to patients. In order to incorporate more messaging around substandard medicines, more content would be published around this issue. The campaign's joint statement will be amended to include an addendum addressing the substandard medicines issue, along with an explanation of the distinction of substandard versus falsified medicines.

Another key consensus among the partners was that it would be extremely beneficial to have private sector partners included in the

(continued on Page 2)

Around the Globe...

- According to the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, increasing amounts of falsified medicines are being produced in the Asia-Pacific region, blamed in part by illegitimate and legitimate pharma manufacturers in India and China having transferred or outsourced part of the manufacturing process to other countries such as Malaysia, Vietnam and Cambodia. By outsourcing processes, companies can avoid tougher regulations and enforcement and benefit from lower production costs. According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, nearly half of the anti-malarial drugs tested in Southeast Asia have been found to be fraudulent.

- Walgreens** and the not-for-profit organization **Vitamin Angels** announced that they have supported more than 200 million women and children in the U.S. and around the world. One percent of sales of participating vitamin products at Walgreen's stores support outreach efforts to communities in need through distribution of prenatal vitamins, promotion of breastfeeding practices and deworming. "The strength of this partnership is our shared commitment to accessible, affordable health care, and Walgreens ability to bring this program to our customers..." said *Alex Gourlay*, president of Walgreens and chief co-operating officer of Walgreens Boots Alliance, adding "Every child deserves a healthy future."

(continued on Page 2)

How Zuellig Pharma is Fighting Fake Medicines in Asia/Pacific with Blockchain

(Source: An Article by Aaron Tan for Computer Weekly)

With one in 10 medical products used in developing countries deemed to be fake, there is a pressing need to eradicate counterfeit drugs that could pose a danger to patients. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), fake drugs, while seemingly identical to the real thing, often "fail to properly treat the disease or condition for which they were intended, and can lead to serious health consequences, including death".

Cracking down on fake drugs, however, is proving to be a daunting and time-consuming task. At Asia-Pacific pharma giant, Zuellig Pharma, it could weeks as it needs to gather data from different parties across its supply chain.

That is where blockchain technology proves its value. Zuellig Pharma has recently developed the eZTracker smartphone app, powered by SAP's blockchain platform, that lets consumers verify the authenticity of a drug and if it has been legitimately distributed by simply scanning a barcode.

"If a product is fake, alerts will be automatically triggered to the manufacturer and to Zuellig Pharma, together with an instant identification

(continued on Page 2)

Fight the Fakes (cont.)...

campaign. Their inclusion would not only boost the campaign through financial contributions, but also through their expertise on the local level. It was decided that these private sector partners would need to undergo a comprehensive vetting process so that the integrity of the campaign could be maintained. There would also need to be significant monitoring and evaluation to ensure that no political lines were crossed which could jeopardize the campaign's standing with important organizations such as the World Health Organization. With the concerns of the partners in mind, the Fight the Fakes Secretariat will begin the process of outlining potential private sector involvement.

A decision was made that, in order to continue with the limited resources at the campaign's disposal, partners would need to become more active in financing the campaign so that there could be more sustainable and greater financial resources available. Potentially, the new campaign governance structure would involve an overall steering committee that would oversee the secretariat and membership. Public affairs and technical agencies would also be needed to help with online presence, resources and material/collateral as well as other fields of expertise.

Several strategic events are slated between now and the end of the year, including the following:

World Health Summit, 27-29 October

World AMR Congress, 7-8 November

Fight the Fakes Week, 2-8 December

Universal Health Coverage Day, 12 December

IFPW member organizations are encouraged to participate in these important events, especially Fight the Fakes week, so that we can better raise awareness about falsified and substandard medicines and their deadly consequences. More information will be sent for these events very soon.

If you would like more information about the Fight the Fakes campaign, please visit www.fightthefakes.org. You may also email Christina Tucker at c.tucker@ifpwfoundation.org or secretariat@FightTheFakes.org.

Zuellig (cont.)...

of where the fake product entered the supply chain," the company said in December 2018.

Elaborating on eZTracker during an SAP regional event in Bangkok in August 2019, Zuellig Pharma's head of SAP and IT solutions, Daniel Laverick, said the SAP blockchain platform captures data from the drug manufacturer about a drug that it has received at its warehouse onto a blockchain.

Laverick said the drug is then moved internally within Zuellig Pharma, before being shipped to consumers, hospitals and drug stores. At that point, information such as drug types and batch numbers are saved on the blockchain.

When the drug reaches the hands of consumers, information about when and where a consumer uses eZTracker to scan the drug's barcode is also written to the blockchain.

In cases where the drug is deemed fake, consumers will be warned about it and advised on the actions they can take, such as informing the authorities or to seek treatment if they have already consumed the drug.

If a drug is a parallel import that is not meant to be distributed in the country where the consumer is, Laverick cautioned that although the drug is genuine and has passed through Zuellig Pharma's supply chain, it may not have been shipped in conditions that guarantee its efficacy.

eZTracker, however, is only the first step in Zuellig Pharma's

blockchain journey. Laverick said the same technology could also be applied to its supply chain to capture sensor data about environmental conditions in which drugs are transported, as well as to facilitate payments and transactions.

Acknowledging the need to build a blockchain ecosystem around a single blockchain platform, Laverick said consumers would not want to use different apps to check the provenance of drugs sold by different drug companies.

"We have to come to a point where we can get to an open platform that we can collaborate on and put all the data in so that consumers would only need to use one app," he said.

Laverick said Zuellig Pharma was also looking at providing data that it has captured on its blockchain platform to the authorities, which would then be able to crack down on fake drugs. The decentralized nature of blockchain networks may deter some cyber crooks, but ASEAN organizations still need to pay heed to the security of their blockchain infrastructure. By doing away with a central authority in internet of things (IoT) networks, blockchain technology can reduce the risk of IoT devices being compromised by a single point of security failure.

Blockchain spending in Asia-Pacific excluding Japan, will reach nearly US\$523.8 million in 2019, an increase of 83.9% from the US\$284.8 million spent in 2018. Countries such as Australia are looking for ways to harness blockchain technology, including in the banking industry and government agencies.

Around the Globe (cont.)...

- ◆ At this year's **United Nations General Assembly** (September, 2019) 12 multilateral agencies launched a joint plan to better support countries over the next ten years to accelerate progress towards the health-related *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs). The "*Stronger Collaboration, Better Health: Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All*" outlines how a dozen multilateral health, development and humanitarian agencies will collaborate to be more efficient and provide more streamlined support to countries to deliver universal health coverage and achieve health-related SDG targets. Director-General of the **WHO**, *Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus*, stated "Although collaboration is the path, impact is the destination. The release of this plan is the beginning, not the end, of that path."

- ◆ The international organization **Doctors Without Borders** has called for more transparency in the distribution of the ebola vaccine and has accused the **World Health Organization** of restricting availability of the vaccine in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In a statement, the organization's director of operation, *Dr. Isabelle Defourny*, noted that at least 2,000 people could be receiving the vaccine each day, as opposed to the maximum 1,000 who are vaccinated daily under current guidelines.

- ◆ *Dr. Paul Marik*, chief of pulmonary and critical care at Eastern Virginia Medical School has introduced a treatment for sepsis with successful results. Through IV infusions of vitamin C, along with hydrocortisone (a steroid to reduce inflammation) and thiamine (a vitamin B derivative), patients have seen significant improvement and complete condition turnaround. A study, published by *CHEST*, an American College of Chest Physicians medical journal, revealed the results. More studies and testing are being planned.

(Sources: Company Press Releases, Drug Store News, The ASEAN Post, The Virginia-Pilot, and World Pharma News)