

AN OPEN MEMO TO THE HEALTH INDUSTRY

9 April 2020

Dear Health Industry Representatives,

We are living in extremely challenging times. The COVID-19 Pandemic is forcing us to rethink everything we do. As you are aware, patients with chronic diseases – numbering at least 150 million in the EU – are among the most vulnerable, as many are at much higher risk of serious illness and death from COVID-19. Patients with long term conditions are also directly exposed to any disruptions in healthcare provision. The huge economic impact of the crisis is likely to affect, disproportionately, these patients, widening existing inequalities.

This is a defining moment for all health stakeholders to demonstrate collective leadership and to make the right choices.

For this reason, we are reaching out to you, alongside other institutions and actors from different sectors to request your continued commitment to ensure the best possible outcomes for patients and citizens in Europe and worldwide. More than ever, we need strong commitment from you to provide the most advanced science and expertise, valued partnerships and transparent and ethical behaviour.

We see many very concrete supportive actions undertaken by companies in the wake of the crisis, at local, national and regional level and we welcome these strongly.

We also know, from our member organisations, that many patients are really worried about shortages of medicines and technologies. This is not a new issue, but highly exacerbated by the current situation, the huge surge in demand, and the focus on COVID-19. We are counting on industry to continue to deliver for patients, despite the enormous pressures.

The on-going collaborative, pre- competitive efforts to develop new diagnostics, vaccines, medical technologies and treatments swiftly to respond to COVID-19 is vital, and equitable access equally so. We hope and expect principles of fairness and justice to be applied, echoing EPF's statement on value and pricing. Availability and affordability of innovative technologies have never been more important.

The current situation has forced some clinical trials to halt, others to be conducted differently. It is very important that patients receive clear and timely information, support and where needed, continuing treatment.

We hope that our cumulative work in the area of patient engagement in the life cycle of medicines and technologies, from the earliest stages and throughout, continues to be a beacon. Patients and citizens play an essential role in ensuring treatments and therapies respond as closely as possible to their critical needs.

Finally, we count on your support, alongside other stakeholders, in ensuring we all learn from this pandemic, and apply those learnings in building resilient people-centred health systems for the future.

I look forward to receiving a response as soon as possible, that we can share with our communities.

Best wishes

Marco Greco

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marco Greco', written in a cursive style.

EPF President