

President's perspective

Joan Peppard

As I start my Presidency, I am excited at the prospect for continued growth in the role hospital pharmacists play in enhancing care for patients. The members of the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) have placed a trust in me to maintain and develop EAHP's role in achieving this trend. I thank the membership for having that confidence in me and also for all the often unseen endeavours they make in conducting pan-European professional development and representation activity.

I'd like to take a moment to tell you a bit about myself and the change in the profession that I have seen in my career in Ireland. I qualified in 1980 and started work in hospital pharmacy in 1982. I have worked in various roles in the Midlands of Ireland and I am the Head of Pharmacy in the Midlands Regional Hospital, Tullamore, a regional hospital with a number of specialties. The pharmacy staff has grown from 1 in 1989 to almost 30 today. Now, instead of just being in the dispensary, pharmacy staff are valued members of the multidisciplinary team. This makes our work very rewarding and demanding at the same time. I am committed to and passionate about the role that hospital pharmacists can and do play in optimising patient care. Medication is the most frequently used intervention in the care of patients. Hospital pharmacists, the experts in medication management, must advocate for patient care through an expansion in use of the skillset that is available.

I came to know the EAHP through my involvement with the Hospital Pharmacists Association, Ireland (HPAI), the representative association for hospital pharmacists in Ireland. The sharing of best practice, the commitment to

excellence and to ongoing education are shared characteristics of both the HPAI and EAHP. Both organisations also share a committed belief in the value that hospital pharmacists can, and should, contribute to optimising patient care.

What we've learned in Ireland, and across Europe, is that hospital pharmacy will never simply be handed opportunity—hospital pharmacists must proactively seek, identify and capitalise opportunities to expand practice in the interest of patients. Growth in medicines and medication-related technologies, coupled with ageing population trends means that achieving optimal medication use will continue to be a challenge for all health systems, and which hospital pharmacists should seek to help overcome.

For these and other reasons, in 2014 EAHP called a Summit of its 34 member countries, and all other European health stakeholders, including patient organisations and our colleagues in the medical, nursing and other health professions. The results of the European Summit on Hospital Pharmacy were 44 clear statements that set out a shared vision between hospital pharmacy, the professionals we work with and the patients we serve as to what each health system should be striving to achieve.

These statements now represent the horizon that we strive to reach and also the measure of how hospital pharmacy is developing.

EAHP will continue to support our profession to meet new challenges, strengthen our workforce through education, and foster and maintain our relationships and connections with healthcare managers, academia and policy makers. To this end, each Board member will focus on key strategic areas to continue the drive for change supported by professional staff in our Brussels office. Change will be enabled by the educational support of our Congress and seminars so

ably steered by the voluntary work of the scientific committee.

EAHP will also ensure that our member organisations have the information, resources and training to advocate at the national level for enhanced roles for hospital pharmacists. There is a big distance between the services we know we can and should provide and the work situations in which we actually find ourselves. Within Europe, we may be starting from different positions and we may be travelling at different speeds, but with the European Statements of Hospital Pharmacy we can join forces to ensure movements in the same direction. We will seek recognition of the skill set of the hospital pharmacist and free movement for hospital pharmacists across Europe and continue to share new ideas and best practices for the benefit of patients in European hospitals.

I look forward to the challenges ahead. I know that many others share my passion, my values and my belief in what is possible. I know that each contribution matters and I get great satisfaction from making a difference. I will work, with the support of the Board and the Office to ensure that the EAHP will advocate for enhanced patient outcomes through the input of hospital pharmacists and that each day the horizon will be just that little bit closer.

To remain indifferent to the challenges we face is indefensible. If the goal is noble, whether or not it is realized within our lifetime is largely irrelevant. What we must do therefore is to strive and persevere and never give up.

Dalai Lama XIV

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