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MedTech Europe and the Contract for a Healthy Future

Contributing to sustainable healthcare through a European medical technology industry alliance

MedTech Europe is an Alliance of European medical technology industry associations. Its current members are EDMA, the European In Vitro Diagnostics Manufacturers Association, and Eucomed, the European Medical Technology Industry Association. Founded in 2012, the Alliance welcomes other European medical technology associations to join.

By establishing the Alliance, Eucomed and EDMA want to represent their common policy interests more effectively and efficiently when needed. These policy domains currently focus on five areas:

1.) Legislation: This area mainly focuses on the upcoming revisions of the Medical Device Directives and the In Vitro Diagnostic Directives, and the implementation of the crossborder directive.

2.) Strategy: With the demographic and financial challenges that Europe is facing, the medical technology industry has drafted a 5-year strategy in which the medtech industry commits to value-based innovation to contribute to keeping Europe's healthcare systems sustainable.

3.) Health Technology Assessment: Both the in vitro diagnostics and the medical devices industries support the appropriate use of HTA, meaning that it should be a tool, rather than an inflexible rule. By focusing on this topic, MedTech Europe wants to contribute to informed decision-making.

4.) Patient Safety: Under this denominator, MedTech Europe will initially be looking primarily at the issue of Healthcare-associated Infections (HCAs), the role our industry can play, and the role patients can play in managing their own safety.

5.) Environment: The medical technology industry actively engages in effective environmental management practices. For manufacturers, it is important to ensure a continued supply of product while minimising their environmental footprint. Hence "environment" as the fifth focus area.

Apart from collaborating closely on these five focus areas, both Eucomed and EDMA remain separate identities. Concretely this means that each of the three associations has its own board and its own Chief Executive Officer.

To achieve its goals MedTech Europe promotes a balanced policy environment that enables the medical technology industry to meet the growing healthcare needs and expectations of its stakeholders. In addition, the Alliance demonstrates the value of medical technology by encouraging its members to execute the industry's 5-year strategy, which focuses on value-based innovations and increased stakeholder relations, through health-economic research and data collection, through clear communications, and through organising industry events and trainings.

Promoting a Balanced Policy-Environment

MedTech Europe promotes a balanced policy environment by engaging with EU regulators, politicians and other policymakers to create policies that enable value-based innovation in our industry to meet growing healthcare needs and expectations.

Demonstrating the Value of Medtech

Eucomed and EDMA have developed a 5-year industry strategy called "Contract for a Healthy Future" which will be executed under the umbrella of MedTech Europe. The Medical Technology Industry recognises the need to change in order to meet the challenges all stakeholders face in steering Europe's healthcare onto a sustainable path. Therefore, the medical devices and in vitro diagnostic industry needs to be a true partner in the shaping of healthcare in Europe for the years to come. In other words, medical technology companies will have to manage their portfolios, their investments with an eye on the other stakeholders in the healthcare system.

At the same time, the industry is committing to evidence-based innovation. No longer should innovation address clinical needs alone. By concentrating on value based innovation, we can marry prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management with cost-containment, efficiency, improved health outcomes and societal benefits. In return, payers and policymakers must overcome silo budgeting in healthcare, and shift toward a holistic approach that considers the true value of medical technology for all healthcare actors. New technologies which improve productivity and efficiency should be funded timely and appropriately in an effort to help people age healthily and tackle the shortage of healthcare resources.

Looking at Value is Looking at the Socio-Economic Picture

We now live in an era where it is critical to assess the full value of medical technology, the real life clinical effectiveness, but also the overall value for a patient and society at large of a novel technology. Assessing the overall value means also taking into consideration clinician experience, patient adherence and compliance, and patient co-morbidities to mention but a few. It is telling that a high number of patients, up to 50%, who suffer from a chronic disease and have to take medication to prevent disease progression, do not stick to their prescription schedule. This only underlines the importance of ensuring that appropriate, real life assessments are made. In any case it will be important to be pragmatic when designing studies to assess the clinical effectiveness and ensure that all available data is taken into account.

Considering patients' health related quality of life, their satisfaction with the treatment and the impact of short and long term side effects are prerequisites when assessing the value of a novel technology. But this is only a starting point. To achieve a future sustainable European healthcare model, it will be critical to assess the full value of a technology and ensure that the socio-economic value and impact on economy and welfare are considered.

The Importance of Investing in Innovation

Less than 10% of healthcare spending goes on medical technologies (less than 1% of healthcare spending goes to in vitro diagnostics). Plotting a smarter course to healthcare delivery will mean radical changes and increasing investment in innovations proven to improve the efficiency of the healthcare system, ensure early diagnosis and prevent disease development.

The right technologies can improve healthcare efficiency, thereby reducing future labour shortages; containing costs, and giving citizens the value of more healthy years in which to be active.

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