

**From:** Erick Savoye [erick.savoye@emhf.org]

**Sent:** 04 April 2008 20:17

**To:** NARHI Ulla (ENTR)

**Subject:** EMHF Reply to Commission consultation on a legislative proposal on information to patients

**Attachments:** EPF\_response ITP final 4 April 2008.doc

Dear Ms Nahri,

The European Men's Health Forum (EMHF) is a member of the European Patients' Forum. We endorse the paper they produced in response to this consultation (attached). In addition, EMHF wishes to highlight the following points :

- The objectives of our European network of member organisations are to promote increased health literacy among men and reduce gender inequalities in the provision and access to health information. Men tend to be less health literate and less proactively seek information and advice from health professionals. They tend to use non-traditional channels such as the internet and peer experience. Such health behaviours tend to be exacerbated among lower socio economic groups (references upon request).
- Information on prescription-only medicinal products represents but one part of a much needed comprehensive health information strategy for which other aspects such as health literacy, access to and provision of health-related information relating to health promotion, prevention, and treatment.
- EMHF welcomes the opportunity for such information to be disseminated via widely accessible channels such as the television in a way that maintains the confidence of citizens, regulators and healthcare professionals.' However, emotional factors inherent to broadcasted media experiences are likely to render difficult the distinction between advertising and the presentation of objectively correct information. This may lead to the perception that prescription drugs are advertised through the back door.
- The Internet remains a main channel of health information for men of all ages where they will seek or receive information without the education/literacy that would enable them to act effectively on it. They are at greater risk of using counterfeit medicines and to follow potentially misleading health advice. In addition to regulating information, this proposal should also include targeted national awareness campaigns about the dangers of unregulated health information, particularly for prescription medicines.

PS: All references available upon request.

Regards,

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EMHF is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit making organisation established to raise male health awareness across Europe. It aims to promote collaboration between interested individuals and organisations on the development and application of health policies, research, education and prevention programmes. EMHF provides a unique platform for non-discriminatory co-operation and information exchange within Europe and with other countries worldwide.

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