



## PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016

For immediate release

### HEALTH ACTION INTERNATIONAL LAUNCHES EDUCATIONAL GUIDE TO HELP EU HEALTHCARE STUDENTS & PROFESSIONALS COUNTER ILL EFFECTS OF PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING

***HAI urges medical, pharmacy and other healthcare faculties across Europe to increase education and training on how to respond to pharmaceutical marketing targeting healthcare professionals***

AMSTERDAM—Health Action International (HAI) today released a new book that teaches healthcare students and professionals in the European Union (EU) how to identify and respond to marketing tactics used by pharmaceutical companies to increase sales of their products. .

The book, entitled *'Fact or Fiction? What Healthcare Professionals Need to Know About Pharmaceutical Marketing in the European Union'*, explains the negative impact of pharmaceutical marketing on healthcare professionals' prescribing and dispensing practices. It also outlines current EU regulations for pharmaceutical marketing, as well as the ongoing problem of industry self-regulation for marketing breaches by companies.

The need for the book stems from research that shows that healthcare professionals are highly exposed to pharmaceutical marketing activities. Yet, education about how to critically appraise pharmaceutical marketing remains inadequate. Indeed, many healthcare professionals fail to recognise that they are personally influenced by it.

"Studies have found that many healthcare professionals believe that their colleagues are influenced by pharmaceutical marketing, such as receiving free gifts and paying for conference accommodation and expenses, but believe that they are personally not influenced," said Ancel.la Santos, Policy Advisor at Health Action International.

"In response to this finding, we developed this book to help healthcare professionals detect the many, often subtle, ways pharmaceutical marketing can influence their clinical practice without them being fully conscious of it," said Santos.

The book, which uses fully referenced information sources, a case study, group activities and exercises, has been sent to universities, medical and student associations, and civil society groups across Europe. These organisations have all been encouraged to share the report with their members and incorporate its content into their curriculums and training programs.

The book can be downloaded free of charge on HAI's website at <http://bit.ly/2f3BwGN>.

#### **Note to Editors**

The report brings to light some concerning statistics on pharmaceutical marketing education:

- 85.2% of surveyed French medical students felt inadequately educated about conflicts of interest
- While 45.1% of surveyed German medical students believed that gifts would influence their prescribing behavior, only 24.1% believed it would affect their own prescribing habits.
- Pharmaceutical companies spend 23% of their turnover on marketing – more than they spend on research and development

**For comment, interview requests and additional information:**

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*Health Action International is the only non-governmental organisation entirely dedicated to strengthening pharmaceutical policy to improve public health. Our staff and global network of members have expertise in virtually all areas of medicines policy, including the price, availability and affordability of medicines, clinical data transparency, intellectual property and pharmaceutical marketing. We pursue advocacy at the patient level and up to the highest levels of government through our 'official relations' status with the World Health Organization and respected relationship with the European Medicines Agency. We are financially independent from the pharmaceutical industry.*

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This document received funding under an operating grant from the European Union's Health Programme (2014-2020). Its content represents the views of Health Action International only and is the organisation's sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency, or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.