

INFORMATION FOR PARTNERS:

May 12, 2020, Sofia

The Association of the Research-based Pharmaceutical Manufacturers (ARPharM) and its member companies are committed to the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic due to coronavirus. Our thoughts are with the people affected by the infection and their loved ones, as well as with the doctors and pharmacists who are at the forefront in the fight to overcome the pandemic.

The Research-based pharmaceutical industry is focused on three key areas:

- the development of new vaccines, diagnostics and drug therapies to combat COVID-19 - around 7 vaccine applicants and over 30 antiviral drugs at various stages of development or use are currently being investigated by innovative pharmaceutical companies in over 25 clinical trials to determine whether they are effective in preventing or treating patients with COVID-19 - <http://arpharm.org/index.php?id=1245>;
- Supporting governments and health systems at local level - ARPharM and its member companies have joined their forces to help the Bulgarian health system and Bulgarian medical professionals in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The support provided so far amounts to over BGN 2,000,000 - <http://arpharm.org/index.php?id=1248>;
- Ensuring the supply of medicines for patients who need them - the member companies of the Association and their employees work around the clock to maintain the supply of medicines in Bulgaria despite the challenges of the pandemic - <http://arpharm.org/index.php?id=1239>

Direct interaction between pharmaceutical companies and medical professionals has a profoundly positive impact on the quality of patients' healthcare as it provides accurate, objective and fair information to ensure the rational prescribing and use of medicines. The companies interact with the Healthcare professionals and disseminate the specialized data on the medicines collected during the research and development activities, as well as from the experience in the treatment carried out with them. The two-way exchange of information supports both effective treatment and the development of new therapeutic methods.

In the current emergency situation, the companies, members of the Association, approach with exceptional attention and responsibility the interaction with the medical specialists, assessing the benefits and risks in each individual situation. Medical professionals are at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic, which is why the representatives of the companies that contact them take into account the following:

- Current legislation, including emergency measures concerning social distancing;
- The instructions and rules of each individual medical establishment or institution;
- The needs of each healthcare professional, including their limited time given the need to focus on patient care and possible pandemic emergencies;

- The internal rules of each company to protect the health of its employees, such as the use of personal protective equipment.

In the coming months, virtual means of interaction with medical professionals will continue to be the main tools of communication given the ongoing pandemic situation.

In case physical interaction is necessary, it is recommended that the representatives of the pharmaceutical companies hold as short meetings as possible, only after prior agreement with the medical specialist for a specific time and place of the meeting, following the instructions and rules for social distancing and protection against infection.

The organization and support of virtual professional, scientific and educational events (webinars) for medical professionals will continue to be the main format of collective interaction of the pharmaceutical industry with medical professionals and their societies.

The organization and support of events requiring the physical presence of medical professionals is carried out at the discretion of each individual company, taking into account all considerations related to the pandemic situation.

***The Association of the Research-based Pharmaceutical Manufacturers in Bulgaria (ARPharM)** was established in 1996 in Sofia as a non-profit organization and unites research-oriented pharmaceutical companies from around the world operating on the Bulgarian market. Members of ARPharM are 24 international drug manufacturers, whose main activity is to invest in the development of new medicines that save or prolong human life or significantly improve its quality. The Association is an associate member of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA).*