



## PRESS RELEASE

### ***The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Wholesalers and Fight the Fakes*** **Welcome WHO Reports on Global Impact of** **Substandard and Falsified Medicines**

**Thursday 30 November 2017, Geneva** – The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Wholesalers (IFPW), as the Secretariat of *Fight the Fakes*, the global campaign against falsified medicines, welcomes the World Health Organization’s (WHO) release of two reports<sup>1</sup> highlighting the scope and impact of falsified medical products, especially in the world’s poorest countries.

One in ten medical products circulating in low- and middle-income countries is either substandard or falsified, according to new data released by the WHO. It estimates that 72,000 to 169,000 children may die each year from pneumonia due to substandard and falsified antibiotics. Falsified medicines either fail to treat or poison patients, and can prolong or worsen illnesses that can lead to disability or even loss of life. What’s more, by passing themselves off as genuine medicines, falsified medicines undermine public trust in health systems and healthcare professionals. In addition, the WHO reports show that all disease areas are susceptible to falsified medicines, with anti-malarials and antibiotics being the most commonly reported as fakes. They are therefore also a crucial factor in the rise of antimicrobial resistance across the world.

The majority of substandard and falsified medicines (42%) are found in sub-Saharan Africa, followed by 21% from the Americas and 21% from the European region. However, these initial estimates may just be the beginning. Given patchy reporting, it is highly likely that these figures represent only a small proportion of the problem.

Licensed, certified, and discriminate pharmaceutical distributors work to protect the supply chain around the world by buying only from the original manufacturer or its agents and insuring that products are delivered to hospitals, drug stores, clinics, and other outlets in the safest and most secure manner.

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<sup>1</sup>[Study on the public health and socioeconomic impact of substandard and falsified medical products, which examines estimates of the prevalence and cost of the issue](#)  
[WHO Global surveillance and monitoring system for substandard and falsified medical products, which highlights the causes, consequences and solutions](#)

The WHO highlights the importance of prevention - including education and awareness, as well as multi-stakeholder engagement. IFPW as the Secretariat for *Fight the Fakes*, leads the global campaign that aligns the actions of 35 partners active along the supply chain, and that provides accurate information on the risks of falsified medicines. IFPW supports the WHO and others through *Fight the Fakes* by explaining how to avoid fakes, how to spot them and how to report suspicious products.

Lend your voice and join our campaign at [www.fightthefakes.org/join-the-fight/](http://www.fightthefakes.org/join-the-fight/).

**For further information:**

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**About *Fight the Fakes***

[Fight the Fakes](#) is a campaign that aims to raise awareness about the dangers of fake medicines. The campaign gives a voice to those who have been personally impacted and shares the stories of those working to put a stop to this threat to public health. It seeks to build a global movement of organizations and individuals who will shine light on the negative impact that fake medicines have on people around the globe and to reduce the negative consequences on individuals worldwide. Founded four years ago, *Fight the Fakes* provides a voice to those who have been impacted by falsified medicines and shines a light on public health risks. Through its networks of partners, *Fight the Fakes* reaches not only the general public, but also thousands of nurses, pharmacists, researchers, NGOs and foundations, academic institutions and their students, pharmaceutical wholesalers, and the research-based and generics pharmaceutical industry.

Its website serves as a hub for materials and online action tools that can be utilized by allies and individuals to inform, inspire, empower, and mobilize communities against fake medicines.

**About falsified medicines**

Nearly any type of pharmaceutical product can be and has been falsified: whether 'lifestyle' medicines, including erectile dysfunction and weight loss medicines, or lifesaving medicines including those used to treat malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, cancer, heart disease, diabetes and other life-threatening conditions. Manufacturers of fake medicines do not discriminate – fake medicines can be both long established and recently marketed medicines, both branded and generic, and both domestically manufactured and imported.