

From: International Alliance of Patients' Organizations

Embargoed until 00:01 Friday 8 April 2016



## **Patients take universal health coverage into their own hands**

**150 patients' advocates from 48 countries are meeting in London to discuss how innovation can help achieve universal, patient-centred and sustainable access to healthcare around the world.**

Patients' groups, academics and health organisations will meet at the 7<sup>th</sup> Global Patients Congress, from 9-11 April, to share innovative best practice, research and to highlight specific examples of how to improve healthcare access across countries and contexts. Topics will include new approaches to community mobilisation, health professional-led innovation in disaster and conflict areas, strengthening health systems and patient involvement in drug development.

The adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals has pushed universal health coverage (UHC) – where all people receive the health services they need, without suffering financial hardship when paying for them - to the front of the health agenda. Every UN member state has agreed to 'ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all' by 2030, which gives patients the timescale and the means to hold them to account. Many patients are taking the challenge of universal health coverage into their own hands by sharing new ideas which already improve healthcare in their communities.

Innovative approaches are improving patient experience, choice of treatment options and outcomes across the world. New examples are constantly surfacing: virtual patient communities now provide greater access to information and peer support, crowd-funding helps patients pay for the research they want to see, and social media helps to normalise different conditions and reduce stigma. These developments are changing the face of healthcare. Patients are more informed, more involved, and more engaged in working collaboratively with others to change health systems for good.

Jolanta Bilińska, Chair of the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations, said:

'History will judge governments against whether universal health coverage is achieved by 2030, but the responsibility lies with everyone involved in healthcare, including patients. Patients have an ethical and moral right to be involved in all decisions about their care, and bring new ideas which can't be replicated by any other group. Patients are already changing healthcare with innovative approaches. Decision-makers at every level must do everything possible to listen to and embrace the patient voice.'

*The International Alliance of Patients' Organizations will host the 7<sup>th</sup> Global Patients Congress in London, 9-11 April. Patients and patients' groups will share further examples of patient-led innovation in healthcare throughout the event. Find out more at [www.iapo.org.uk/GPC2016](http://www.iapo.org.uk/GPC2016)*

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## Notes to editors

### About Congress

- The theme of the 7<sup>th</sup> Global Patients Congress is 'Innovation improving sustainable access: boosting reach and impact.'
- Speakers include Nicolas Sireau, AKU Society, Bruce Eshaya-Chauvin, Health Care in Danger Project at International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Boyle, International Prevention Research Institute, and Nittita Prasopa-Plaizier, Patients for Patient Safety at the World Health Organization. See a full list of speakers at: [www.iapo.org.uk/GPC2016-speakers](http://www.iapo.org.uk/GPC2016-speakers)
- 150 patients' advocates from 48 countries will attend this year's Congress at the Selsdon Park Hotel, 126 Addington Rd, South Croydon.
- The first Global Patients Congress was held in the UK in 2005. Since then, Congresses have been hosted in Spain, Hungary, Turkey and the UK. Each Congress brings together patients' advocates from across the world. Organizations of all sizes share best practice, gain insight into pressing healthcare issues and meet with others passionate about patient-centred healthcare.
- Find out more about the 7<sup>th</sup> Global Patients Congress at [www.iapo.org.uk/global-patients-congress](http://www.iapo.org.uk/global-patients-congress) or follow the event on social media via the hashtag #GPC2016, IAPO's Twitter account [@IAPOvoice](https://twitter.com/IAPOvoice) and IAPO's [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/IAPO) profile.

### About IAPO

The International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO) is a unique global alliance representing patients of all nations across all disease areas. It works to promote patient-centred healthcare around the world. With over 250 members, IAPO represents an estimated 365 million patients.

Find out more at [www.iapo.org.uk](http://www.iapo.org.uk).

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