

Press Release

MAJOR OFFICIAL EVENT TO PUBLICIZE SFEE'S CODE OF PRACTICE

Under the Auspices of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity

The Hellenic Association of Pharmaceutical Companies (SFEE) organized a major official event to publicize its Code of Practice for the Provision of Medical Information on October 29 at the Athens Great Concert Hall.

Present at the event, held under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, were 2.500 distinguished personalities from the country's political, economic, scientific, and academic communities, who were extensively informed on the principles, philosophy, and content of SFEE's Code of Practice.

At the outset of the evening's proceedings, Dionysios Filiotis, President of SFEE, said, *"SFEE's Code of Practice, Code of Deontology, which has been implemented successfully for the past five years and is constantly updated, is a thorough, detailed, and functional text, on a European and international level, as it embodies the most appropriate principles and positions and includes all provisions for the proper promotion of scientific information regarding medicinal products. All SFEE member companies have adopted and are implementing the Code of Practice, thereby underlining our non-negotiable position that the medicinal product is not merely a commercial product but a most sensitive social product."* He continued, *"Nobody can deny the connection of the health system's technological modernization with the concept of deontology. Technological modernization is an ethically correct choice, as it contributes decisively to the elimination of all 'evil demons' within the health sector."*

In concluding he said, "In short, all issues that concern us fall under a set of ethical principles, and all of us, State and private entities alike, are called upon to understand and exercise our duty with commitment."

The keynote speaker, Minister of Health and Social Solidarity Dimitris Avramopoulos said: "SFEE's initiative with the Code of Practice for the Promotion of Prescription Only Medicinal Products promotes the proper use of medicine as a valuable instrument for public health. This initiative takes place at a moment when many important developments in the health sector are beginning to bear fruit." He continued, Provision of up-to-date, concise medical information and the ethical cooperation between pharmaceutical companies and the medical and scientific communities in the research sectors is to the benefit of all the parties involved. Therefore it is imperative that SFEE's initiative is successful."

Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Protection Sofia Kalantzakou and the former Deputy Minister of Health Manolis Skoulakis made in their speeches very positive remarks regarding SFEE's initiative. Mr. Skoulakis said, "I studied the Code of Practice very carefully and I dare say that it is both contemporary and strict at the same time. I hope it will be implemented with care and commitment, so that it may help not only in providing proper scientific information but also in the rational prescribing of medicines, as an important supplement to existing legislation."

George Katzourakis, SFEE's Vice President, said, "The Code of Practice is more or less a code of communication. By functioning between formal legislation and

adopted practices (oral law), deontology bridges the gap between law and conscience, enforcement and self regulation.” He added, “All SFEE members believe that the Code is an important instrument for the establishment of mutually accepted, fertile, and effective relations. We hope that by implementing the Code our vision for the rational use of medicines, in favour of public health and our fellow citizens who are ill, will be realized.”

Distinguished representatives of the health sector and the academic community made short presentations:

Professor Kyriakos Striggaris, President of the Central Health Council (KESY), said, *“The mutual benefit for citizens, health professionals, public or private social insurance bodies, and pharmaceutical companies is providing what is considered to be the best treatment for patients. SFEE’s Code of Practice, as well as all other initiatives of self regulation in the sector, lead to marking and reinforcing the above mentioned simple, yet valuable, truth.”*

Dimitris Vagionas, President of the National Organization for Medicines (EOF) and President of the Pan-Hellenic Association of Pharmacists, said, *“It is a very important fact for EOF that the pharmaceutical industry is taking a leading role in the self-regulation of the sector. Advanced societies set Codes of Ethics as supplements to existing laws, adding a moral dimension to the legislative structure. I am happy that this characteristic of contemporary societies is present in our country, with the pharmaceutical sector taking the leading role.”*

Professor Anastasios Manthos, Rector of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, said, *“We honor and respect SFEE’s Code of Practice, and look forward to its implementation and constant adaptation, based always on an impulsive inner need for its acceptance. We have high expectations and expect the first priority to be the care of our fellow human beings who are ill and subsequently any other ethically correct initiative.”*

Emmanuel Kalokairinos, President of the Pan-Hellenic Medical Association and President of the Medicines Pricing Committee of the Ministry of Development, said, *“SFEE’s Code of Practice for the promotion of Prescription Only Medicinal Products is undoubtedly a major benchmark in the sector of medicinal products. Important relations among the companies belonging to your association are being defined and their limits are being established, something which will have a positive effect, as even the strongest competition does not abolish certain moral principles and values.”*

Gerasimos Konidaris, President of the International Association of Unions of Medical Representatives (UIADM), President of the Pan-Hellenic Federation of Medical Representatives (POIE), said, *“The Code of Practice, issued by competitive companies in the pharmaceutical industry, is a step in the right direction. Those of us who are employed in the health sector have a direct relationship with the pharmaceutical industry as well as with health professionals. We welcome this effort, which aims to upgrade the sector and promote the health of its citizens, which is the first priority for all of us.”*

Konstantinos Lourantos, President of the Institute of Pharmaceutical Research and Technology and President of the Association of Pharmacists of Attica, said, *“SFEE today is publicizing the Code of Ethics as a measure of professional and moral*

responsibility of its members towards Greek health professionals, and especially toward patients and citizens. Acceptance of this Code is a symbol of honor. The challenge is to adhere to the principles of proper practice despite any criticism your members may encounter.”

Vice Rector of the University of Athens, Professor George Kreatsas, closed the proceedings and said, *“SFEE’s Code of Practice commits all its members to specific practices, methods, and behaviors. It holds the Greek pharmaceutical industry to a high European standard regarding the quality of provided services.”* He added, *“In combination with the remarkable positive efforts of the other professionals of the health sector, SFEE’s Code of Practice contributes to the protection of public health, discourages negative practices, and sets high standards in the medicines sector of our country.”*