



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Patients call for greater support for meaningful involvement in healthcare decision making as a means to ensure equitable distribution of limited health resources

- *A Call from IAPO's 4th Global Patients Congress on Strengthening Healthcare Systems Globally* -

London, United Kingdom, 1 March 2010 – Patient advocates have called for more meaningful engagement in healthcare design and delivery at the **International Alliance of Patients' Organizations** (IAPO) 4th Global Patients Congress in Istanbul, Turkey. The Congress was held with the support of the Access to Health Association of Turkey.

Patients' organizations are knowledgeable and motivated to work with information, facts and figures to promote policy change, providing they are involved at decision-making level and treated as equal partners. Patients add value to discussions and decisions by enabling analyses that take into account the reality of what is happening within health systems today. The impact of the global economic situation on healthcare budgets and changing demographics, including a dramatic increase in the number of people with chronic conditions, requires health systems to change and adapt rapidly. Patients must therefore be at the centre of healthcare globally and at the forefront of decision-making.

"We have identified models of patient and public engagement that are successful and can serve as catalysts for further change within healthcare systems. One such model is the European Medicines Agency, where patients play an active role in a number of committees. We strongly advocate that patient engagement should happen in all health systems to the benefit of systems, patients, and thus the public at large." says Hussain Jafri, Chair of IAPO. "Real concerns can be aired and appropriate measures taken that empower patients, health professionals and authorities alike."

The Congress brought together over 100 delegates from around the world, representing patients and other stakeholders in health such as the Council of Europe, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to address the subject of **Strengthening Healthcare Systems Globally: The Value of Patient Engagement**. Patient engagement has been a principal focus of IAPO's work since its foundation. IAPO advocates for patients and patients' organizations to share the responsibility of healthcare policy-making through meaningful and supported engagement at all levels and at all points of decision making. IAPO is a unique global alliance representing patients of all nationalities across all disease areas and promoting patient-centred healthcare around the world.

More information on the Congress can be found at www.patientsorganizations.org/congress

IAPO's Policy Statement and Guidelines on Patient Involvement can be found [here](#)

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