



Adopting Global Healthcare Standards Will Solve Many Issues Facing the Health System, Says Visiting Expert

Some of the biggest challenges facing the healthcare system can be assisted by introducing global standards to improve patient safety and supply chain efficiencies, says the visiting Founder and Director of GS1 Healthcare Global User Group, Ulrike Kreysa.

Ulrike Kreysa manages the GS1 Healthcare Global User Group which was formed by stakeholders in the healthcare supply chain, including pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers, wholesalers/distributors, group purchasing organisations, hospitals, pharmacies, logistic providers and governmental and regulatory bodies and associations.

The voluntary, non-profit body's mission is to develop and implement international standards for Automatic Identification and Data Capture, global data synchronisation and traceability.

Ulrike Kreysa is in New Zealand to attend the GS1 Healthcare User Group Australasia's one-day conference, *Raising the Bar on Patient Safety and Supply Chain Efficiency*, held in Wellington today (Wednesday March 2). New Zealand and Australia are two of the 25 countries that have established local GS1 Healthcare user groups to drive adoption of GS1 healthcare standards.

Kreysa says five major challenges affecting patient safety currently exist in the healthcare supply chain. These are:

- Medication errors, which result in additional treatments, disabilities and even loss of life.
- The growing global threat of counterfeiting trade for medicines.
- Traceability of medicines from manufacturer to patient.
- Product recalls can be difficult to manage, in particular for healthcare providers.
- A lot of manual interventions in the healthcare supply chain decrease its efficiency and accuracy.

She says the healthcare supply chain is still very inefficient and the adoption of standards will not only lead to more efficiency and accuracy but at the same time cost savings. "In New Zealand, like everywhere else, we need to save money especially as our population grows older," she says, noting that one of the Government's objectives is to bring down health costs and spend healthcare money where it is needed.

By adopting GS1 standards, the United States health system alone has the potential to slash costs by US\$10 billion, she adds.

Ulrike Kreysa says that while the GS1 Healthcare Global User Group's work developing international healthcare standards continues, global standards are already available for many healthcare applications including:

- Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) Allocation Rules for Healthcare.
- Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC) Application Standards for 90 per cent of medical products.

- AIDC Application Standards for small instruments.
- Global Traceability Standard for Healthcare.
- Guideline for plasma derivatives.

Editor's Note: Ulrike Kreysa is in New Zealand until Monday, March 7, and available for media interviews.

For more information about the conference visit:

http://www.gs1nz.org/healthcare_gs1_healthcare_user_group_australasia_conference.php

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