

Good Distribution Practice passport is a key element in Pharma Supply Chain



The value of global exports from Ireland of pharmaceutical, medical devices and associated chemicals, along with active medical substances now top the €50 billion mark. This makes the role of Good Distribution Practices in the supply chain ever more important. The IDA claims that Ireland is the second largest exporter of Med Tech Products in Europe and hosts nine out of the Global Top Ten pharmaceutical companies amongst the 75 such companies actively manufacturing and exporting here.

As these sectors have grown in Ireland the Irish Exporters Association (IEA) has played a central role in ensuring that the companies can reach and exceed the required compliance role in assuring quality of the supply chain and distribution of pharmaceutical and medical device products. In 2009, the IEA launched its Good Distribution Practice (GDP) programme, which is supported by the Irish Medicines Board and throughout the pharmaceutical industry in Ireland. This makes the industry what it is today - a trusted and regulated one ensuring the security of the supply chain and patient safety.

Speaking at a recent Passport presentation event, IEA chief Executive, Simon McKeever said: "The potential for falsified and counterfeit medicines has resulted in increased vigilance for all parties involved in the manufacture, distribution and export of pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Since

we launched the GDP programme, although it is voluntary, we have received a positive response from our members and currently have 2000 staff trained with forty-five companies obtaining the GDP passport".

Dr. Niall Stobie, IEA Life Sciences Manager & GDP Programme Director said: "The reason why GDP training is so important is due to the Falsified Medicines Directive and the EU GDP Guidelines released in 2013 - both focussed on driving patient safety along a multinational supply chain." He explained that the GDP Passport Code of Practice consists of a suite of classroom and on-line GDP training modules for Freight Forwarders, hauliers as well as Air and Sea freight service providers, followed by a site audit and review process by a number of global pharma manufacturers. "In essence, it is one side of the industry reviewing the other with the benefits of increased communication between all parties to enhance patient safety," he added.

Niall concluded: "The number of subcontracted companies involved in the supply chain for biopharmaceutical products with different modes of transport and temperature control requirements has increased significantly. The GDP passport certification has become the gold standard for GDP certification in Ireland with all leading logistics service providers in the field now having obtained certification". The IEA programme is, in fact, now

being extended internationally with training being provided in a number of EU and Middle Eastern countries.

(For further information on the GDP passport, contact Dr. Niall Stobie at e-mail: niallstobie@irishexporters.ie).

SUPPLY CHAIN IRELAND - WATERFORD EVENT - 13 APRIL

By the time you get to read this, the IEA Supply Chain Ireland Group will have met in Waterford. Speakers include Michael Connelly from Connolly's Red Mills, Paula Tebay of Bausch + Lomb, Joe Cleary from Revenue and Declan Black from the Marine Survey Office at the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport.

Joe Cleary's talk focuses on the EU's Unified Customs Code which comes into force on 1 May, while Declan Black will have discussed the practicalities of the International Maritime Office "Verified Gross Mass" rules coming into force for all container shipments by sea, from 1 July.

Further Supply Chain events are planned to take place in Cork on 15 June and in Galway on 12 October. Like the Waterford event each of these will have a strong Regional focus.

(For further information on these events, contact Sinead Branigan at e-mail: sineadbranigan@irishexporters.ie or phone: (01) 642 4174.

Text: Howard Knott