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We still hope for the best and continue our preparations for the Pharmtech expo despite the coronavirus pandemic that has spread almost to all countries of the globe. What awaits us after the pandemic comes to an end? What impact will the pandemic have on the Russian pharmaceutical industry? Will it drive development of domestic manufacturers? What will the Russian pharmaceutical industry be like?

I believe that we will be able to evaluate the impacts of the pandemic on the economic and social life of our society in a while. All industries have been affected, and the pharmaceutical industry is not an exception. Our priorities changed all of a sudden - raw material stocks, increasing cost thereof, rouble devaluation, and limitations to international logistics. At the same time it was necessary to deliver uninterrupted operation of production facilities, warehouse and pharmacies for timely procurement of medicines. Pharmaceutical companies rapidly adjusted their business processes to change the profile of their production facilities in line with the demand of the society for disinfection agents, medical face masks, sanitizers and some medicines required for coronavirus treatment.

We would like for the Pharmtech expo to open its doors for the visitors and run offline. But even if it is not the case we hope that it will be held in a way that will be corresponding to the challenges of our time and be in trend...

What will happen to the medicine marking project? Will the marking due dates postponed again due to the pandemic?

Most members of the commodity distribution system on the pharmaceutical market call for a prolongation of the term for transition to mandatory marking until the pandemic gets under control. Most manufacturers and distributors are 100% ready to start marking from July 1. However, we will be able to evaluate the readiness of health care institutions and pharmacies upon the results of a large-scale testing of the entire marking system, including remote regions of our country. The large-scale testing has not been launched yet, now for epidemiological restrictions. Improvement of IT software, equipment commissioning, interaction between professionals, incl. on foreign platforms, are held online, and all these factors slow down the process.

Let's not forget the load on the health-care institutions, many of which were re-profiled for coronavirus treatment and are experiencing tremendous loads. The same goes to pharmacies. It is necessary to prevent shortage of medicines and interruptions in the marking system in such a hard time.

We addressed deputies of the State Duma and the Chamber of Commerce on behalf of our Association to postpone the scheduled due date for the marking introduction at least by half a year...

Will online drug trade boost? Will Yandex, Ozon, etc. be able to obtain licenses for drug trade?

Recently, the Government approved the remote trade guideline. Currently, it applies to over-the-counter medicines. Experts of the Association of Professional Pharmaceutical Organizations have thoroughly researched the topic and regulations for representatives of the entire commodity distribution network - manufacturers, distributors, and pharmacy chains. The released document meets our expectations in general. It covers the most important issues such as obtaining and expiry of licenses, specifies the rules for courier delivery, sets forth penalties, etc. All these measures have one big goal to deliver high-quality medicines to people in line with the applicable law.

Online drug trade is developing worldwide, and Russia should not be an exception. This service is of utmost demand now during the pandemic. However, experienced pharmaceutical market actors that are able to provide a high-quality delivery service in line with the legal requirements should be entrusted with the online drug trade. Though cities with populations of over one million will definitely enjoy the service, it is a question whether or not it will be available to residents of remote regions. I think we will get the answer soon enough...

Are there any plans to review the prices for life-saving and essential medicines due to a shortage of Chinese pharmaceutical raw materials and limited import of foreign drugs?

Pricing of drugs in turnover on the pharmaceutical market is one of the priority issues in the strategy of our association. Production profitability is a key prerequisite for launching new modern medicines, clinical developments, advancement of the quality assurance and other essential principles of the pharmaceutical industry development. Manufacturers should set a selling price to ensure that patients can afford such drugs and that their company may develop at the same time. Currently, the demand for active pharmaceutical ingredients have materially increased and so has their price. Hence, manufacturers suffer from increasing expenses. The FX rate growth, marking expenses and other factors make cheap medicines say goodbye to the market. It applies to both Russian and foreign medicines, for treatment and prevention of coronavirus and other diseases.

The Association of Professional Pharmaceutical Organizations addressed the Russian Government with a proposal to set forth a rate for low-cost medicines to minimize the risk of shortage proactively by way of a legal regulation.



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