PLUS – The Platform of Plasma Protein Users

BY JOHAN PREVOT, CO-AUTHORED BY BRIAN O’MAHONY

PLUS, the Platform of Plasma Protein Users, represents organizations of patients with treatable, rare diseases linked by common therapies based on products manufactured from human plasma.

PLUS has been active since 2010 when it convened the first Consensus Stakeholders Meeting in Dublin, which focused on the collection of blood and plasma and the manufacture of plasma products. Since then, the consensus meetings have been held every year. Key stakeholder organizations active in the field of blood and plasma derived medicinal products participate with a view to discuss developments affecting patient communities and to identify consensus principles.

Two consensus statements on vital issues relating to the collection of blood and plasma and the manufacture of plasma products were published in Vox Sanguinis as an outcome of the discussions held during the two first meetings.

These statements were extremely valuable as they provided, for the first time, a summary of key principles upon which the various stakeholder organizations agreed on (some with qualification).

In 2012, the meeting looked at “Optimized Supply of Plasma Derived Medicinal” products. The consensus statement has been submitted for publication and should be published shortly.

This year, the PLUS Stakeholders Consensus Meeting was held in Estoril, Portugal in September. The meeting was organized to identify new topics that the PLUS consensus stakeholders’ platform should look at in the future; subsequently, two sessions were organized. The first focused on risk-based decision making (RBDM) and specifically the Alliance of Blood Operators (ABO) RBDM project that aims to develop an integrated risk management strategy. It was agreed that the project could be a significant first step to
establish a framework for managing the interrelationship of risk tolerance, supply of blood and plasma derived medicinal products and economic considerations in the future. PLUS will circulate an open letter outlining PLUS’ position on this topic following the discussions at the meeting and will encourage the inclusion of the various stakeholder groups that participate in the PLUS consensus meetings into the ABO project. A follow up meeting may also be envisaged in 2014.

The meeting also featured a session on “Treatment in 2020: Patient & Physician Views.” The various patient communities attending the meeting highlighted their priorities, as well as the opportunities and threats to an optimal supply of plasma derived medicinal products (PDMPs) in the future.

In addition, PLUS has been involved in a range of policy discussions at the European Union (EU) level. PLUS has agreed to a consultation mechanism with the European Commission (EC) to ensure the rare plasma-related disorders’ patient views are always taken into account in the decision-making process of relevant policies.

PLUS has recently taken part in the EC's consultation regarding the potential review of the Blood Directive. PLUS has also launched a Call to Action highlighting the priorities of the PLUS patient communities.

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Upcoming policy dossiers of relevance to PLUS include: the implementation of the cross-border healthcare directive, EU actions in the area of Health Technology Assessments and the review of the Blood Directive and the implementation of the EU Council rare diseases recommendations at national level.

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Participants at 2012 Consensus Meeting

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**PLUS member organizations include:**