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Press Office

Press release

European Medicines Agency Management Board elects Kent Woods as new chair

Board also discusses new proposals to handle conflicts of interests

At its 9 June 2011 meeting in London, the European Medicines Agency's (EMA) Management Board unanimously elected Kent Woods, Chief Executive of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) of the United Kingdom, as chair for a three-year mandate.

Accepting his election, Professor Woods told the Board that, "it is my ambition to provide strategic leadership in helping the Agency to continue to protect public and animal health and maintain public trust."

Proposals for better handling of conflicts of interests

The Board agreed on a way forward for introducing changes to the way the Agency handles potential conflicts of interests of staff members. The proposed changes are aimed at achieving a more robust system for staff, mirroring the same principles on handling conflicts of interest adopted by the Board in October 2010 for committee members and European experts.

Once implemented, the rules will clarify allowable and non-allowable interests for staff, and strengthen controls on the appointment of individuals as product team leaders. The rules will also require new Agency recruits to divest any interests prior to appointment.

The Agency also initiated discussions with the Board to find a common approach for the management of conflicts of interests throughout the EU network.

Annual report 2010

The Management Board adopted the Agency's annual report 2010, which saw increases in workload in almost all areas. On the human side, the number of post-authorisation activities, orphan-medicine designations, scientific-advice procedures and referrals continued to grow. Workload also increased on the veterinary side, with the number of applications for marketing authorisation and referrals exceeding expectations, and requests for scientific advice almost doubling in comparison with the previous year. The full text of the annual report will be available on the Agency's website after final editorial changes.

Notes

1. This press release, together with all related documents, is available on the Agency's website.
2. Kent Woods has a background in academic medicine and also holds a Master of Science in Epidemiology. Before joining the MHRA as Chief Executive in 2004, he was Director of the National Health Service Health Technology Assessment Programme. He has been an EMA Management Board member since 2004.
3. Photographs of Kent Woods are available from the EMA press office on request.
4. The full membership of the Management Board is available on the Agency's website.
5. The new policy on handling conflicts of interest for scientific committee members and experts is available on the Agency's website.
6. All relevant documents adopted at the Management Board meeting will be published on the Agency's website.
7. More information on the work of the European Medicines Agency can be found on its website: www.ema.europa.eu

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