

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

**PHARMACY AND POISONS BOARD**

**REMARKS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE DURING KENYA PHARMACOVIGILANCE AND POST-MARKETING SURVEILLANCE STAKEHOLDERS’ FORUM VIRTUAL WORKSHOP ON 7TH DECEMBER 2021 AT 9:00 AM**

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**Esteemed colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is my pleasure to be here for this important pharmacovigilance (PV) and post-marketing surveillance (PMS) stakeholder engagement meeting. It is great when once in a while, we all come together to engage in focused discussions around strengthening of Pharmacovigilance and market surveillance of Health Products and Technologies in Kenya. These functions are key as they impact on patient safety and health of the public.

The Pharmacy and Poisons Board inaugurated the Kenya National Pharmacovigilance/ Post-Marketing Surveillance Technical Working Group in **July 2020**. The TWG brings together representatives from Ministry of Health, Public Health Programs, Central Procurement agencies, Teaching and Research institutions as well as Quality Control Laboratories. This structure provides a platform for information exchange and joint implementation of PV/PMS activities as well as effective coordination of these activities.

Monitoring quality, safety and efficacy of medical products and technologies is critical in detection and prevention of substandard or falsified products, detection, reporting and management of Adverse Events associated with Health products as well as protecting safety and health of the public. To this end, the PPB has established a robust pharmacovigilance and post-marketing surveillance system. One of the components of the system include the **Pharmacovigilance Electronic Reporting System** (PvERS) that provides a platform to both members of the public and healthcare professionals to report suspected adverse events and suspected poor quality medical products.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** we need pharmacovigilance and post-marketing surveillance now more than never before because of the COVID 19 pandemic. The deployment of multiple types of COVID 19 vaccines in Kenyan population requires heightened safety monitoring of the vaccines to generate local data on their safety. To this end, the Pharmacy and Poisons Board in collaboration with National Vaccines and Immunization Program and development partners has initiated **targeted spontaneous reporting (TSR)** activity in **fourteen** (14) **Counties;** Nairobi, Uasin Gishu, Nyeri, Meru, Garissa, Kakamega, Kisumu, Mombasa, Nakuru, Machakos, Kiambu, Kilifi, Turkana and Kajiado. This initiative is aimed at accelerated detection and reporting of Adverse Events following immunization with COVID 19 vaccines.

We live in the era of big data, Artificial Intelligence and machine learning which heralds immense opportunities for safety data collection and analysis and use of data for decision making. Indeed, I urge all stakeholders and key players in Pharmacovigilance and Post-Marketing surveillance to utilize Information Technology and Innovation for strengthening of PV/PMS activities.

I urge this forum to generate ideas and innovations that would help move Pharmacovigilance and Post-Marketing surveillance to the next level. Some of the focus areas include strengthening collaborations with Public Health Programs, County Health Departments and other key organizations to facilitate awareness creation on adverse drug reaction and adverse events detection, reporting and management, evaluation of the current reporting system and its effectiveness and new strategies that can be employed to increase the reporting rates. In addition, targeting of the public for awareness through Information, Communication and Education (IEC) materials is equally important for risk and safety communication. Research on consumer reporting medium preferences will be useful in order to target reporting tools and pharmacovigilance messaging based on reporter preferences.

**Lastly,** let me take this opportunity to thank all of you for finding time to participate in this engagement and wish you fruitful deliberations. I am looking forward to the next steps and recommendations from this meeting.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** I now declare the meeting officially opened.