

IOF Women Leaders's Roundtable, May 11, 2002

The Challenge & Purpose of Today's Meeting:

Mel Read, Member of European Parliament and Chair of the European Parliament Osteoporosis Interest Group

- The Challenge we face today is that in numerous countries around the world women do not have access to diagnosis and proven therapies for osteoporosis until after the first fracture. Unbelievably many women experience unnecessary suffering caused by broken bones because they did not know they had osteoporosis until after a fracture. This also results in unnecessary expense to governments and health insurance agencies because broken bones are expensive to mend. And the problem will only get worse as the population around the world ages.
- The purpose of this meeting is to announce a "call to action" to urge policy makers around the world to make the diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis a priority on public health agendas so that the first fracture is prevented. Today's call to action geographically expands the European Parliament Osteoporosis Interest Group's call to action which was announce at the end of last year.

Changing Osteoporosis Policy Now, Mel Read, Member of European Parliament and Chair of the European Parliament Osteoporosis Interest Group

- We've seen and heard how serious osteoporosis is. The considerable human and economic costs. And that osteoporosis results in more disability than many other diseases such as stroke, heart attacks and breast cancer.
- We've highlighted the major challenges we face today with restricted availability of diagnosis and proven therapies, until after the first fracture in countries such as Australia and France. That to date osteoporosis has not yet received the attention it deserves by policy makers...that the osteoporosis movement is about a decade behind the achievements of the breast cancer movement.
- We've heard how we must take responsibility of our own health

- And we've discussed what a difference advocacy can make and how today's collective call to action can be used pragmatically within a country, such as Canada, to change osteoporosis policy now.

Which brings us to the purpose of today's meeting to announce our call to action which builds on and geographically expands the call to action announced by the European Parliament Osteoporosis Interest Group at the end of last year.

We the patrons and members of the Women Leaders' Roundtable, and the IOF urge policymakers around the world to make the diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis a priority on public health agendas by taking the following actions:

- **Pay for bone density scans and improve the availability of bone densitometry machines for people with osteoporosis risk factors before the first fracture.**
- **Pay for proven therapies for people with osteoporosis before the first fracture.**

We, the patrons and members of the Women Leaders' Roundtable will act as osteoporosis ambassadors in our respective countries and regions to strongly support these changes. We urge women, physicians and all concerned people around the world to help us bring about these changes. We will reconvene in two years to monitor progress.

Today, osteoporosis can be easily prevented and effectively treated. We call upon government leaders and policy makers around the world to act now to improve access to osteoporosis diagnosis and proven therapies, thereby improving the lives of millions of women today and ensuring a better future for millions more.

Our Call to Action will now be signed by the patrons and members of the roundtable