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Change in vfa leadership effective May 1, 2011

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Birgit Fischer to be Director General of the vfa

Berlin (vfa). Effective May 1, 2011, Birgit Fischer will become Director General of the German Association of Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (vfa). At present, Ms. Fischer is Chair of the Management Board of Barmer GEK, Germany's largest statutory health insurance fund. Prior to that, she was Minister for Health and Social Affairs of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and head of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) state parliamentary group in North-Rhine Westphalia. She will succeed Cornelia Yzer who, as previously announced, is leaving the vfa after 15 years of fruitful service to take up a new professional challenge.

Contact:

Susan E. Knoll
Phone 030 20604-200
Fax 030 20604-202
s.knoll@vfa.de

"Birgit Fischer is an experienced and recognized health care expert and we are very pleased that she is joining the vfa. She is a highly competent partner for government and society and will act with expertise and commitment in presenting our association's positions," says Dr. Wolfgang Plischke, Chairman of the vfa. According to Plischke, Birgit Fischer's aim will be to intensify the vfa's dialogue with all players in the health care sector.

"In Germany, we need a coalition for health care in which all the sector's players work to safeguard the quality of services to patients and promote innovation. It is for this reason that I am looking forward to the tasks ahead," says the vfa Director General designate. Ms. Fischer went on to say that the health care sector is undergoing radical change. For this reason, all those involved must come to a common understanding of the perspectives and possible solutions to problems. They must also make every effort to cooperate.

Profile: Birgit Fischer was born in Bochum, Germany, on October 4, 1953. After completing a university degree, she held positions in

Hausvogteiplatz 13
10117 Berlin
Telefon 030 206 04-0
Telefax 030 206 04-222
www.vfa.de

education and in the public sector. Between 1991 and 1998 she was head of the SPD state parliamentary group in North-Rhine Westphalia. She was then Minister for Health and Social Affairs of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia until 2005. Between 2005 and 2007 she was a member of the SPD presidium. She then moved to the Barmer GEK health insurance fund. Birgit Fischer is a member of the Supervisory Board of the Ruhr University in Bochum, a member of the Supervisory Board of the German Sport University in Cologne and a member of the Presidium of the Lutheran Church Congress. She is married and has one son.

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A photo of Birgit Fischer can be accessed using the following link:

<http://www.vfa.de/bildarchiv>

The German Association of Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (vfa) is the trade association of the research-based pharmaceutical companies in Germany. It represents the interests of 44 globally leading research-based pharmaceutical companies and more than 100 subsidiaries and affiliated companies in the areas of health, research and economic policy. The vfa member companies make up about two-thirds of the German pharmaceutical market and employ nearly 90,000 people in Germany, including more than 17,000 in research and development. The vfa's press conferences – also available on the Internet. For more information, please visit: <http://www.vfa.de/onlinepk>