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**Press Release**

**MITERA Children's Hospital – Doctors of the World -Greece Free-of-charge large-scale vaccination program for children**

On the occasion of the International Day for Children on 11 December, HYGEIA Group's MITERA Children's Hospital and the NGO Doctors of the World-Greece jointly announced the launch of a free-of-charge large-scale vaccination program for the children attending the NGO's Medical Clinic in Perama.

The MITERA Children's Hospital responded with sensitivity to the request of the NGO for support to the families of these children, as part of the Hospital's Corporate Social Responsibility. It initially offered 8 different types vaccines (300 in total) to the children who, due to the adverse economic conditions, have lost one of their fundamental rights: that of access to healthcare and pharmaceutical care.

During a special ceremony held on Monday 12 December at the Perama Medical Clinic, representatives from the MITERA Children's Hospital, accompanied by one of the Hospital's ambulances, handed over the vaccines to the medical staff. The ceremony was attended by the Mayor of Perama, Mr Pantelis Zoumpoulis, representatives from the Doctors of the World-Greece and local pediatricians working with the NGO.

Mr Nikitas Kanakis, Chairman of the Doctors of the World-Greece Board, thanked the HYGEIA Group for its kind offer and voiced the belief that this action will assist in raising social awareness among other bodies during these tough times, all for the benefit of the children. As he highlighted, "There has been a significant increase noted in the number of children needing vaccination at our Medical Clinics both in Athens and Perama, as the majority of the parents are poor and uninsured. That is why it is important for us to be able to offer at least basic vaccination to the children who have no access to the National Health System. It is everyone's obligation to fight for the fundamental rights of children and to clearly strive for their benefit and their health in general, be it physical, social or mental."

On his part, the Director of the MITERA Children's Hospital, Emeritus Professor Christos Bartsokas, underlined the significant contribution of the HYGEIA Group to the needs of children,

especially in this tough economic climate. As he noted, “For the children, prevention is worth more than a thousand cures and that is why we are here, to make this social offer for the benefit of the children. Vaccines have saved millions of lives around the world and have assisted medical science in combating serious illnesses, such as poliomyelitis, measles, diphtheria and so on, while even in Greece, hepatitis still constitutes a plague, which we hope to abolish directly through vaccination and proper hygiene rules.”

“In the almost 10 years it has been operating, the MITERA Children’s Hospital, the most comprehensive tertiary children’s healthcare provider in Greece, has been standing by children and their families with respect and a sense of responsibility, fully addressing all their needs.”