



“PATIENTS RIGHTS” DIRECTIVE: MEPs REJECT FRENCH PROPOSAL

On 26 January MEPs from the European Parliament’s Employment and Social Affairs Committee criticised a French proposal to tighten up requirements for patients to obtain permission before receiving hospital care in another Member States, under the so called “Patients Rights” Directive unveiled last year. In December the French Presidency of the EU, supported by most Member States, proposed that prior authorisation should be obligatory for hospital stays of at least one night or for costly treatments. However, Parliamentarians stressed the importance of balancing prior authorisation with the freedom to access treatment anywhere in the EU. The Committee will vote on the amendments on 11 February.

The French proposals are reflected in amendments to the Directive which have been put forward by the Council of Ministers. These are available at:

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st15/st15655.en08.pdf>

EU CANCER SCREENING REPORT HIGHLIGHTS GAPS

On 22 January the European Commission published its first report on the implementation of the 2003 Council of Ministers Recommendation on cancer screening. Although much progress has been made in the area of cancer screening, the report says that more is still required. EU Member States undertake less than half of the minimum number of recommended examinations.

The Commission intends to form a European partnership for action against cancer in 2009 by bringing together relevant stakeholders across the EU in a collective effort to address cancer.

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dyna/consumervoice/create_cv.cfm?cv_id=506

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT IN EUROPE

“Health Technology Assessment and Health Policy-Making in Europe. Current Status, Challenges and Potential” is the title of a new book published by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. Since the establishment of the first national HTA agency in Sweden in the 1980s, the number of European institutions involved in the assessment of health technologies has multiplied. Most European Member States have established a formal HTA programme or are considering the feasibility of establishing HTA intelligence to inform

health policy-making. The purpose of this publication is to transmit the value of HTA to wider decision-makers and healthcare managers in order to increase their awareness of HTA activities and evidence-based decision-making.

<http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E91922.pdf>

EU SUPPORT TO AFRICAN HEALTH SERVICES CRITISICED

On 14th January the European Court of Auditors published a special report on EU development aid provided to healthcare services in Sub-Saharan Africa. While welcoming activities such as EU funding for the launch the World Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, it notes that the share of EU funding for the healthcare sector has barely risen since 2000 and falls short of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The report highlights other concerns including inadequate health expertise of Commission's delegations working with these countries.

<http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/2020216.PDF>

EU SEXUAL HEALTH FORUM

DG SANCO of the European Commission is considering setting up an EU Sexual Health Forum and is inviting stakeholders to express their interest in future collaboration and planning meetings. This follows an EU roundtable on safer sex for young people and a workshop on sexual health held in 2008 (see below). The next meeting is planned for 13th March in Brussels. If you would like to take part, please apply with an outline of your interest and expertise to Mr Wolfgang Phillip, European Commission, at wolfgang.philipp@ec.europa.eu) before 13th February 2009.

"Towards a European Strategy on Sexual Health for Young People - Realities, Gaps and Needs"

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/sexual_health/ev_20080522_en.htm

MEPs ADOPT REPORT ON MENTAL HEALTH

On 22 January the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted unanimously its report on Mental Health, drafted by Evangelia Tzampazi MEP.

The Committee proposes the establishment of a multi-stakeholder consultative platform to implement the "European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing" and encourages Member States to strengthen service user and carer organisations so that they can input into policy and decision making. However, some observers in the mental health community are concerned that the report focuses too much on the burden of mental illness rather than on positive mental health and wellbeing.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/FindByProcnum.do?lang=2&procnum=INI/2008/2209>



Questions? Contact jeni.bremner@ehma.org