THE FIRST DIRECTIVE FOCUSSING ON ‘PATIENTS’ RIGHTS’ – WHAT DOES THIS REALLY MEAN FOR PATIENTS ?

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The EU Directive on cross-border healthcare

EPF European Patients Forum

The Directive on cross-border healthcare is not perfect…

BUT!

It is an important milestone for patients!

Key benefits

- ✓ Recognition in EU law that patients have a **right to cross-border healthcare** and **to be reimbursed**
- ✓ **Right to information** – creation of a NCP in each Member State
- ✓ Right to a **copy of the medical record**
- ✓ Right to **appropriate medical follow-up**
- ✓ Recognition of **prescriptions** made abroad
- ✓ Transparency of quality/safety standards for healthcare
- ✓ Legal basis for **MS co-operation on eHealth** and **HTA, rare disease, quality/safety standards**

Some areas of uncertainty/concern

- Implementation so far – Member States are in different stages, will all comply?

- **Equity** – will cross-border healthcare be an option **for all citizens?**

- **Information and support** – will NCP become an enabling service or a gatekeeping mechanism?

Croatia – What are the key issues?

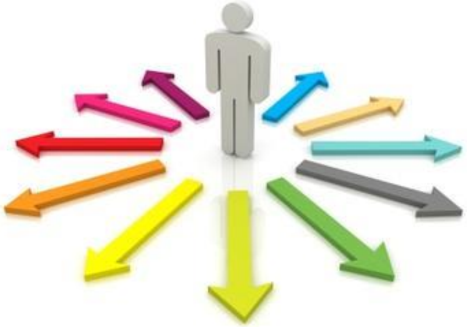
- Long waiting lists for specialist visits in some specialisms
- Lack of specialists
- High cost of modern treatments, high co-payments
- Rare diseases
- **Infertility patients**:

  1. inconsistent criteria and approaches (public vs. private HP)
  2. some patients (5-10%) can access treatment only abroad

  (only 10-20% of the treatment cost is reimbursed)
- **Barriers faced by patients in Croatia**: upfront payments, low health literacy, lack of information about the Directive

Croatia – why is the Directive important?

- **Right to choose**
- **More flexible options for patients to get medical services as soon as possible** – although only if they can pay upfront
- It will **stimulate providers to strive for improving quality** – important for patients in Croatia who access care "at home"



Question 1 – How much will I be reimbursed?

- **Reimbursement = same amount as "at home for similar treatment"**
- **What about travel costs?** Member States are obliged to cover only the cost of treatment BUT they can decide to reimburse the full cost of the treatment and extra costs.
- Member States must have a **transparent mechanism for reimbursement** – based on objective, non-discriminatory criteria.

Question 1 – How much will I be reimbursed?

- **Example**

	At home	Country A	Country B	Country C
Treatment cost	€100	€120	€90	€75
Reimbursement	€80	€80	€80	€75
Patient pays	€20	€40	€10	None

- BUT patient pays upfront – claims reimbursement
- Travel & other costs not covered

Question 2 – Do I have to pay upfront?

- **Yes:** Patient have to pay and claim back the expense afterwards

The directive:
Equity of access!

Non-discrimination, universality, access to good care, equity and solidarity

BUT!

Upfront payment will be a barrier for many

Question 2 – Do I have to pay upfront?

"We want a system of direct cross-border payments to ensure equitable access!"

In the Directive:

Cross-border payments exist: but **as a voluntary option**

➔ **Role of Patient organisations:** should advocate in favour of direct payment to increase equity of access

Question 3 - Directive or Regulation?

The Directive

- Covers ALL providers
- NO prior authorisation (in certain cases only)

The Regulation

- only cover public-sector or contracted providers
- require prior authorisation
- BUT cover patient's actual costs
- AND possibly better for rare diseases

→ **SO - Which one is best?** Sometimes it is better for the patient to access care abroad under the Regulations than the Directive (with prior authorisation)

→ **How do I know?** NCP is obliged to inform patient which regime is better

Question 4 - Information to patients

What information can I ask to the National Contact Point ?

- NCPS should provide <u>all information needed </u>for a patient to make an informed choice
- Easily accessible, available electronically, accessible to people with disabilities

Question 4 - Information to patients

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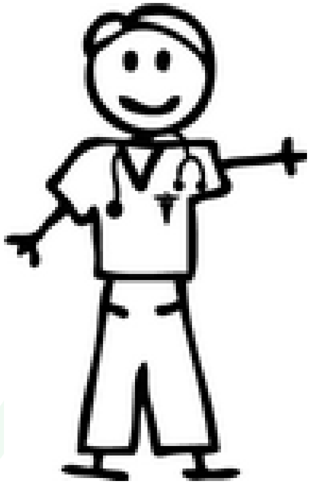
And what about healthcare providers?



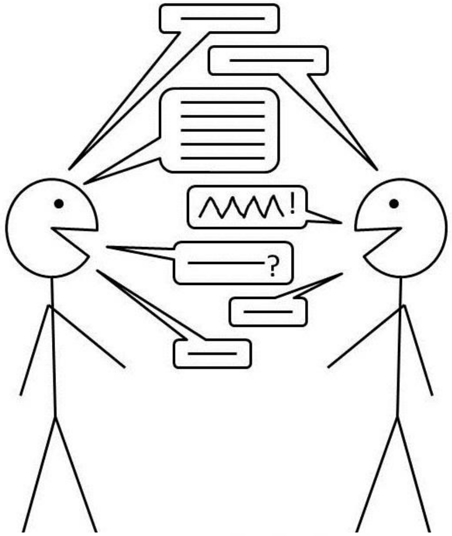
- Healthcare providers should also provide the information needed to help patients make an informed choice:
  - treatment options and their availability
  - quality and safety of the healthcare
  - information on prices
  - clear invoices
- They must also provide information about their authorisation /registration status and professional liability insurance (Article 4(2)).

Question 4 - Information to patients

- These transparency provisions have a lot more potential than just to inform patients considering treatment abroad
- **Patients and patient organisations can use them to get informed about their rights, the safety and quality of treatment and how it compares to other MS**
- These tools can be used to push for better quality and access to healthcare also “at home”
- **We hope they will lead to improvements across the EU, for all patients**

What can Patient organisations do?

- **Engage with your NCP**, give feedback on how it serves patients



- **Ask your government to set up a system for direct payments and/or prior notification**

- **Give feedback to EPF and the EC** on all aspects of implementation – how it “works” for patients (and when it doesn’t)

What can Patient organisations do?

- **Provide information on your organisation's website**
- **Use the EPF tools!**

More information – links

[EPF position statements on cross-border healthcare]

[EPF "toolkit" on cross-border healthcare: guidance and recommendations]

[Core quality principles for information to patients and methodology for use]

[Value + resources for patient involvement]

[EPF position statements on health literacy and information to patients]

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Le Forum des Patients Européens "Mieux se faire entendre pour mieux se faire soigner"

EPF Spring Conference 2007 Report

European Patients' Forum is pleased to announce that EPF Spring Conference 2007 report is available to download. Please visit our updated Publications section for further instructions.

Information to Patients: an EPF response

EPF responds to the European Commission's Draft Report on Current Practice with Regard to Provision of Information to Patients on Medicinal Products more...

Highlights from EPF Annual General Meeting 9-10 June 2007

EPF's Annual General Meeting took place over the weekend of 9-10 June 2007 in Brussels. Delegates were delighted to welcome four new full members: the European Section of the International Diabetes Federation, and National Patient Umbrella Organisations from France, Lithuania & Spain. more...

Information to patients - the Fundamental Right to Know

The subject of "Information to Patients" has gained momentum in recent months. It is a subject that goes to the core of EPF's work and transcends much of what we do. more...

EPF Spring Conference Outcomes : Moving forward together

Building on the success of our previous conferences, the European Patients' F
hosted a third EU conference on 20th-21st March 2007 in Brussels. The the

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