



EHFG 2012: Financial crisis hits European health systems hard - High quality medicine in danger

The tightening of financial resources all over Europe will likely have a direct impact on the functioning of European healthcare systems and the health of European citizens. Besides problems such as the reduced availability of certain treatments in the countries with the severest austerity problems, an impact of the crisis on the EU health workforce will be felt also in the wealthier parts of Europe, experts told the European Health Forum Gastein.

Bad Hofgastein, 4 October 2012 – “The first consequence of the crisis is a direct financial impact for doctors, resulting in a rising demotivation within the profession”, Dr Edwin Borman, Secretary General of the European Union of Medical Specialists today told the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG). In a number of countries there has already been a freeze on recruitment and retired staff are only partially – or not at all - replaced. The number of healthcare staff is subject to no expansion and in certain cases even to a reduction whilst the workload and the requirements in quality continue to increase.

For the remaining doctors the challenge to practice high quality medicine gets increasingly difficult, said Dr Borman: “Resources are also frozen or significantly reduced and doctors have to deal with the consequences. In some cases the scarcity of drugs or equipment available will inevitably lead to rationing. So far the medical profession collectively in individual countries and throughout Europe, while speaking on the negative consequences of the crisis and advocating for best resources and quality of care for patients, has increased its productivity even further and, even with limited resources, continues to deliver high quality of care for patients.” For how long the high level of health could be kept under current conditions remained to be seen, said Dr Borman. “Even though the medical profession continues to be committed to its ethical responsibility, we are deeply concerned that some governments are putting financial constraints higher than their duty to the current and future health of the population.”

The EHFG is the most important conference on health care policy in the European Union. In this its 15th year, the EHFG attracts more than 600 decision-makers from 45 countries to discuss major topics on the future of the European health care system from 3 to 6 October 2012.

Please find photos of the European Health Forum Gastein using this link:
<http://www.ehfg.org/940.html>.

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