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### The Greek Health Services Management Association

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In Greece there are two employee confederations, one for the public and the other for the private sector. The Greek Federation of Public Hospital Personnel falls under the public confederation and the Federation of Unions of Private Hospitals under the private sector confederation.

This way of organisation may seem rather simple, but, in practice, it means that professionals (e.g. doctors, nurses, pharmacists, technicians, etc.) in every health sector have their own representative organisation that

organises congresses, publishes periodically and address their demands.

The first organisational institution of its kind in Greece, the *Administrative Hospital Directors*, was founded in 1995. This association was mainly a trade union, whose members came from the public sector only. One of its main activities was organising the annual national congress for healthcare management services, which was first held in 1999. The *Administrative Hospital Directors* played an important role in changing Greek legislation and establishing the practice of appointing managers in Greek NHS hospitals. In 2001 the first managers – previously active in the private sector – were deployed in public hospitals.

The members of the *Administrative Hospital Directors* then decided to disband the association, resulting in the Greek Health Services Management Association (GHSMA) being founded in 2002. The GHSMA is mainly a scientific organisation whose members work in either the public or private sector.

A basic requirement for membership is a university degree in sciences that is related to management in health services. Most of the members are senior executives (managers, directors, etc.) – in public and private hospitals and companies in the health sector –, doctors, nurses, health economists, computer specialists, and hospital engineers – who are active in healthcare management services. Other members include academic staff from research faculties at various universities.

The GHSMA is not affiliated to any political party, but informs Parliament, the government and other organisations related to the healthcare industry of its actions and decisions.

The Association processes and publishes proposals for the modernisation of hospitals and the better organisation of sanitary systems, by means of thematic committees. Although the organisation has not existed that long, its sphere of influence is growing markedly, especially amongst those politicians who share our vision.

The main objective of the GHSMA is to change the job description of hospital managers to a more technocratic one, as these are mostly political positions. This means that with every change of government, almost all hospital managers in Greece are replaced. Consequently, we have many new members, but some are less actively involved than others.

Our Association supports:

- The application of modern methods of financing hospitals (DRGs or Global Budgets).
- The continuation of computerising hospitals, as well as the utilisation of health informatics in the country.
- Changing the legal status of public hospitals, in order to acquire more operational flexibility.

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The GHSMA continues to organise the annual, national Congress on Health Services Management, in which more than 1000 people participate every year. The Minister and the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Solidarity attended the eighth Congress – that took place 28-30 September 2006. The Association also organises regional events and lectures in various cities.

The website ([www.eemyy.gr](http://www.eemyy.gr)) offers a raft of information on Association decisions and statements, Greek and international healthcare news, a bibliography, announcements of congresses and events, etc. Currently, the content is only in Greek.

The official journal of GHSMA, the *HEALTH REVIEW- Sciences, Technology and Policy*, is a bi-monthly publication with a circulation of 10 000. The magazine focuses on scientific work for hospital management, health economics, health informatics, health policy, quality, education, etc.

The GHSMA Board has seven members, elected by the General Assembly every two years. The next election will take place in October 2007.

In January 2006 the GHSMA submitted an official application for EAHM membership. We presented our Association to the EAHM Board, in Algarve, Portugal on 16 June 2006, and to the Executive Committee in Dublin, on 30 August 2006. The following day, the General Assembly decided unanimously to accept the GHSMA as a full member of EAHM.

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