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Proposed Health Priorities of Hungarian EU Presidency

Miklós Szócska MD, the Hungarian Minister of State for Health outlined the priorities of the upcoming Hungarian Presidency of the European Council at the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) in October 2010. The overarching theme of the proposed health programme of the Hungarian Presidency will be 'Patient & Professional Pathways in Europe'. Planned legislative priorities include carrying on the legislative process of the draft directive on patients' rights to cross-border healthcare and promoting enhanced cooperation among Member States to prepare the implementation of the directive. The promotion of the European Union's pharmaceuticals package, which aims to ensure that EU citizens have access to reliable information on medicines, the grounds on which they have been authorised and how they are monitored. The proposed health priorities of the Hungarian Presidency, which begins 1 January 2011 include:

- Investing in the healthcare systems of the future. This includes facing the challenges of ageing populations, technology development, trade-offs between quality, accessibility and financial sustainability. There is a definite need for new models of efficient healthcare and scarce investment resources must be used efficiently and to serve new models.
- Mobility of health professionals. This includes balancing free movement and equity in access to high quality health care and improving the retention capacities of national health services. Need-driven training is to be promoted as well as enhanced cooperation at EU level to address health workforce shortages across the EU and the motoring of the movement of health professionals.
- Public Health. Including special focus on mental health, in particular the evaluation of the outcomes of thematic conferences under the European Pact on Mental Health and Well-being, cross-border aspects of childhood vaccination and health promotion especially disease prevention and the effectiveness of national public e-health programmes.
- eHealth. Focusing on an IT supported, evidence-based, health policy decision making process. Also using telemedicine as a tool for better, more efficient and more accessible care and promoting cross-border healthcare related IT aspects, including data protection and health data reuse & research

The eHealth Conference taking place 10-13 May 2011 in Budapest was also highlighted as an important forum on European Health and IT. The Spain-Belgium-Hungary Trio Presidency identified 'Health Inequalities' as an overarching theme, with specific to focus on:

- Innovation and solidarity in healthcare (prioritising the ageing population, chronic diseases and eHealth);
- Cross-border healthcare;
- Quality and safety of healthcare, and
- Health professionals.z

Dr. Miklós Szócska explained that during the Hungarian Presidency "We will certainly move ahead with several of the core areas taken on by the Belgian presidency, but we'll do so with a special Hungarian flavour" and the Hungarian Presidency will be advocating a basic approach of "More pragmatism and efficiency in health care policy". "Solidarity within and between the countries, efficiency and sustainability are the adequate answers here. There are a lot of issues that a nation simply cannot handle with its own resources. We need a common framework for efficient pathways for both, patients and health professionals. This is a debate we want to initiate," Szócska said.

For more information, please visit: www.eutrio.hu

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