

Volume 8, Issue 3 /2006 - News

EAHM

EAHM Advocates More Influence for Health Service Managers

The EAHM has responded to the European Commission's health and consumer protection programme 2007-2013.

The Community action programme in the area of health and consumer protection, which will run from 1 January 2007 until 31 December 2013, replaces the current programme in the area of health and consumer policy. The primary purpose of the new initiative is to combine within one framework Community policies and programmes in the areas of public health and consumer protection.

The programme has four strands, including the following which is of particular interest to the EAHM:

"Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health services by establishing a new strand of action in order to create synergies between national health systems, particularly by facilitating the cross-border purchase and provision of healthcare."

In addition to consolidating the three strands of action in the current health programme (surveillance of health threats, health determinants and information), the new programme creates three new areas of action: delivering a response to health threats, preventing diseases and injuries and achieving synergies between national health systems.

The EAHM Committee on European Affairs – chaired by Mr Paul Castel – drew up the EAHM commentary on the latest programme, which it submitted to the appropriate agencies within the Commission:

"The EAHM welcomes the Commission proposal, which has created new challenges by amalgamating health with consumer protection. It is difficult to promote healthier lifestyles and protect citizens from disease when ordinary health services are being neglected.

The EAHM calls for balanced action and seeks enhanced influence not only for patients but also the other stakeholders in healthcare, including the managers of health services. While EU initiatives may provide impulses, it is the experts in the health sectors who are the real driving force for co-operation between health systems."

Dialogue with the European institutions and other international organisations will be maintained and intensified. At its next meeting in October, the committee will discuss a number of areas of Commission activity and actively engage at EU level by continuing to represent the interests of EAHM members.

Working Group on Psychiatry Comments on the Green Paper on Mental Health in Europe In late 2005 the European Commission adopted a Green Paper entitled "Promoting the mental health of the population: Towards a strategy on mental health in the European Union."

The purpose of the publication was to help improve the effectiveness of measures to tackle mental ill health and to promote mental well-being in the EU. The importance of mental health can be gauged by the fact that mental illness affects one in four adults in the European Union.

The Green Paper paves the way for the development of a mental health strategy at EU level. The Commission's

proposals include an initiative to establish a Communitywide platform for mental health which would bring together expertise from across the sector to determine how to mainstream mental health and ethical issues within a wide range of policy areas. The Commission also proposes to develop a knowledge base at EU level to monitor trends, collect data and disseminate information on best practice.

Following detailed consideration of the Green Paper, the EAHM Working Group on Psychiatry drafted a policy document on the Commission's proposals. It states: *"We fully support the initiative to establish an EU-wide strategy on mental health within the ambit of the Union's competence. The need to treat good mental health as a priority is supported by a range of indicators. The fact that good mental health contributes to the strategic priorities of the*

EU is obvious. The importance of good mental health to the individual citizen is self-evident."

The full text of the working group's statement is available on the EAHM website.

EAHM Attends Parliamentary Hearing on Mental Health EAHM representatives attended the European Parliament's public hearing on EU policy on mental health held 8 June 2006. The meeting provided an interesting overview of national policies in the field of mental health and generated many ideas on what action should be taken in relation to the Commission's Green Paper. John Bowis MEP, who organised the hearing, set out the European Parliament's position on mental health and the Green Paper.

Dr Matt Muijen, Director of Mental Health at WHO Europe, Wilma Boevink from the European Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry and Giovanni Berlinguer, MEP, an expert in Italian outpatient mental healthcare outlined current national trends in mental health policy and practice. Further information on the hearing, including details on speakers, can be obtained from the EAHM secretariat.

Published on : Mon, 24 Jul 2006