

PATIENT PAYMENTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
PROJECT SEMINAR - 15-16 March 2010 –www.assprocee2007.com

Policy paper Ukraine: Perspectives for official patient payments implementation in Ukraine

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Abstract:

The Ukrainian health care system is characterised in general by lack of funding. There is an oversupply of narrowly specialised medical staff, high number of hospitals and beds, and shortage of nursing personnel and broad specialists. The wide network of health care facilities in the cities contrasts with problems of access in the villages. The poor state of rural facilities is attributed the small budgets of villages and towns. The right to free-of-charge medical aid is guaranteed for every Ukrainian citizen by the Clause 49 of the Constitution of Ukraine. However, in a very limited number of cases official patient payments exist. There is some evidence on the existence of informal patient payments in the country.

The preliminary results of the study indicate that the health care actors in Ukraine (incl. consumers, providers, policy-makers and insurance experts) support the introduction of official patient charges for health care services. According to them, the introduction of official patient payments could be an appropriate response to the needs of the health care system. It could also enable legalisation of doctor-patient relationships, control of the overall health care expenditure, and generation of additional resources for the entire health care system or particular health care institutions.

Overall policy recommendations: (1) information campaigns should be carried out because neither providers nor the consumers have credible information about the possibilities of introducing social health insurance and about the obstacles of implementing official patient payments; (2) health care actors believe that the introduction of the official patient payments could be a rational step to provide for sustainability and further development of the health care system; (3) official patient payments are also seen as an adequate reaction to the State's inability to offer health care services with adequate quality to all population groups.

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