

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

Policy paper Hungary: Experiences in the focus-group discussions and in-depth interviews in Hungary

Presented by Ms. Petra Baji

Center for Public Affairs Studies Foundation; Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem; Budapest

Abstract:

The introduction of patient payments for public health care services in Hungary was first communicated to the public in 2006. As a result, co-payments (flat-rate fees) for public health care services were introduced in February 2007. However, the system of formal patient payments worked only for one year. In April 2008, the formal payments were abolished as the result of a referendum initiated by the opposition. Nevertheless, there is evidence on widely spread informal patient payments in the country.

The results of the study indicate that there is a gap between the opinion of policy-makers and health insurance representatives on the one hand, and health care consumers and providers on the other hands, with regard to patient payments. While the first group emphasise the necessity of formal patient payment in Hungary, the second group doubt the need of these payments.

Overall policy recommendations: (1) close communication with the public and health care providers is needed to clarify the objectives and content of a future patient payment model in Hungary; (2) health care consumers and providers should be involved in the decision-making process. Social consensus on this issue is necessary before re-introducing formal patient payments; (3) the attitude and perceptions of the Hungarian population need to be taken into account since consumers are quite sceptic about politics and “health care reforms”.

Address for contact:

*Center for Public Affairs Studies Foundation; Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem
Fovam Ter 8; Budapest 1093; Hungary
Tel: +36-1-4825147; E-mail: petrapostalada@gmail.com*