

**SESSION 2: CORRUPTION AND INFORMAL PATIENT PAYMENTS****PRESENTATION KEYNOTE SPEAKER:****“FIGHTING FRAUD IN EUROPE: THE CHALLENGES”**

Paul VINCKE

President  
European Healthcare Fraud and Corruption Network  
158, av. de Tervueren  
1150 Brussels, Belgium  
E-mail: Paul.Vincke@riziv.fgov.be

**ABSTRACT:**

The health systems in a number of CEE countries are in need of additional financing. But before investing more money into it, it is paramount to investigate where the money is being lost and wasted and to stop this from happening. Fraud and corruption are a part of the problem. Once these losses have been identified, a comprehensive approach should allow for efficient and effective tackling of the monetary sinkholes.

In line with the findings of a Thomson Reuters study, published in October 2009, the estimates are that approximately 30% of the health care budgets in Europe is wasted. “Waste” being defined as “health care spending that can be reduced without reducing the quality of care”. There are six types of waste to be identified. Fraud, abuse and corruption are one of them. Fighting fraud and corruption in health care is not an easy task. It is a difficult nut to crack because of little transparency, powerful lobbies of stakeholders, and the tendency to avoid the “F” and “C” words.

Moreover, because the payer is separate from the recipient of health care services, there is no natural check on the actual provision of goods and services. “The payer has no way of verifying that the service was provided and the patient has no way of knowing that the healthcare provider has billed for a service the consumer did not receive” (source: Thomson-Reuters, 2010). This lack of transparency is to be considered as one of the main reasons why the healthcare sector is prone to fraud and corruption.

The financial problems in the health care systems in CEE countries are beyond the effect of fraud and corruption only. How to effectively deal with bankrupt hospitals, closed-down operation rooms, poorly paid physicians and nurses, inadequate patient care and widespread corruption is a question that requires a multi-angled approach. Stopping the financial losses due to fraud and corruption is one of them. Restoring the public trust in the health system is paramount.

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