

UEMO 99 / 014  
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AGENDA  
UEMO WORKING GROUP  
ON  
GENERAL MEDICAL SERVICES  
~~Saturday 12~~ Friday 11 June 1999  
Lisbon, Portugal

Chair: Dr Christina Fabian

Rapporteur: Dr Hans Witmer

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1. Opening
2. Adoption of Report of last meeting (UEMO 98/108) as amended and approved by Plenum
3. Dispensing Physicians; progress report from sub group
4. Status report on the cooperation between UEMO and ESGP/FM
5. UEMS' position on Primary Care (UEMO 98/005);  
Comments from the NMAs
6. Progress report on cooperation project with the PWG on Medical Workforce Planning (reference doc. UEMO 98/066)
7. Sports medicine - a recognized medical speciality ?
8. Physicians' Autonomy; possible UEMO activity  
(reference doc. EFMA statement of 7-9 March 1999 )
9. Development cooperation: Status report on questionnaire, UEMO 98/091
10. Any other business

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European Forum of National Medical Associations and WHO meeting in Tel- Aviv, Israel 7- 9 March 1999

#### Statement on Physicians' Autonomy

Reaffirming that the prime duty of physicians is the care of their patients.

Recognising that substantial appropriate professional autonomy is essential if physicians are to fulfil their professional responsibilities to their patients, and comply with the ethical code by which the medical profession is governed,

Accepting that this corresponding responsibility on the part of the profession requires the guarantee of an accountable transparent self-regulation by the medical profession,

Stressing that the individual physician and the profession as a whole, will take account of the structure and resources, culture of the society of which it is a part,

Reaffirming that as a profession, physicians as part of the self-regulatory process, accept responsibility for determining standards of quality of care provided by individual physicians to their patients,

Accepting that professional autonomy is granted to physicians by society; that society demands a corresponding responsibility on the part of the medical profession, and that this forms the basis of the confidence of society in physicians.

Noting the Statements of the World Medical Association on Professional Autonomy and Self-Regulation (Madrid, 1987) and on the Rights of the Patient (Lisboa, 1981 and Bali, 1995),

Considering that physicians'

autonomy is at risk wherever professional freedom is restricted in the course of cost-containment or rationing for economic reasons,

Considers it essential that legislation relating to the practice of medicine by fully licensed physicians should take into account the following considerations and principles relevant to their role in society;

- a) physicians need to have professional autonomy to make clinical decisions on the diagnosis, care and treatment of patients,
- b) that the confidence which society has in physicians merits the granting of appropriate professional independence,
- c) in the best interests of the patient, physicians have a duty to safeguard the confidentiality of their patients when exercising their profession, and that their right to carry out this duty should be incorporated in legislation,
- d) all physicians should have the right to independent practise,\*
- e) the physician should not be penalised, financially or otherwise, when acting to safeguard on behalf of sick and vulnerable patients,
- equal access to effective treatment,
- the availability of adequate resources to care for each patient,
- f) legislative provisions relating to the autonomy of physicians must not conflict with the provisions of the International Code of Medical Ethics.

\* For constitutional reasons, WHO cannot take a position on this point: