

IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED CARE SERVICES FOR OLDER AND CHRONIC PATIENTS

(Organised by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Centre for Research and Technology Hellas in Thessaloniki

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BACKGROUND

Apart from fragmented efforts by some academic and public institutions, there is no specific policy that exists in Greece focusing on the comprehensiveness, continuity and coordination of care for chronic patients. In addition, management of the fiscal crisis in 2009 was based on public spending cuts that did not allow for cost-effective strategies in management of chronic diseases, the major consumer of the health and social budget.

Chronic patients' care is currently both inefficient and unsatisfactory, as well as contributing to the overcrowding of hospitals. The implementation of policies and practices to address the problem is needed urgently. The ongoing primary care reform presents a good opportunity to adopt integrated care services. The organisers of the policy dialogue acknowledge that sustainable implementation needs to be supported by all relevant stakeholders.

OBJECTIVES

To exchange ideas and proposals of implementation strategies. The policy dialogue was an effort to gather commitment to improvement and optimization of integrated care, with special emphasis on elderly and chronic diseases patients.

CONCLUSIONS AND MAIN ACTION POINTS

It was agreed to continue the communication between the participants with the aim to developing and coordinating cross-sectoral and multi-sectoral activities.

Main Action Points:

- Major primary care reforms led by the Ministry of Health;
- Improved ICT enabling care for older and "less favoured" people in Northern Greece;
- Incorporation of use of ICT in health and social care in technological academies;
- Capacity building for health professionals by the National Centre for Public Administration and its Vocational Training Institute;
- Training for management regarding disease prevention and attention to people with NCDs in hospitality sectors by the Northern Greece Hotels Association;
- Mobilisation on chronic diseases by major national associations like the Greek National Insurance Company, the Panhellenic Medical Association and the Greece Centre of Disease Control and Prevention.