



MESSAGE FROM MR. EUGEN NICOLĂESCU MINISTER OF HEALTH GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA

Honorable audience,

The Romanian Government began an extensive reform in the Romanian sanitary system. At the end of last year the new leading team of the Ministry of Health initiated the legislative package regarding the Health reform, after ample public debates that had lasted for more than four months.

By implementing the legislative package regarding the Health reform it is intended, first of all, **the improvement of the medical services' quality**. We want all the people who need medical care and assistance and who get to hospitals or other medical units to benefit of better services.

The second objective of the legislative package is **the fight against the corruption within the system by a clear separation of the managerial positions from the professional ones**. We aim at eliminating this huge conflict of interests determined by the plurality of posts. This is because we noticed that many times, due to the normal, human incapacity of having two key – positions, namely to fully exercise the medical and the managerial position the same time, both of them have been afflicted. Many times, the consequence is a questionable quality of the management and a poor administration of hospital units, including the financial aspects. The last controls highlighted that there are many hospital units with huge costs due to “serious” management mistakes.

In this way, the legislative package for the health reform promotes a clear separation of the responsibilities in order to allow the doctors to practice medicine and those with economic and management studies to manage these units from economical point of view.

The Health law promotes, beside **the institutional reform in health, the continuous professional education of the medical staff and the practice of emergency medicine through the qualified national emergency system and first aid.** This legislative package includes provisions for **the development of voluntary health insurances and for increasing the financing of the national health system, with view to realize the infrastructure and the national health programs.**

A major objective is the development of more new national programs. This will be the responsibility of a Programme Agency specially created for this purpose. An example of program which is foreseen by the new reform is the one regarding transplant. For the design and implemenation of those programs, more funding will be allocated from the state budget.

The reform in health has also as primary objective the efficient expedinture of the existing resources. The fund allocation shall be done in a different manner from now on: larger sums will be destinated for illness prevention and smaller amounts for hospitals, which are the biggest funds consumers. The minuses of the sanitary system, which has functioned quite inapropriate so far, shall be eliminated and the people will be able to feel the first positive effects during the fourth quarter of this year.

The patients will be able to feel the improvement determined by the reform starting with the level of the general practitioner, who will be better paid, based on the services provided to the insured people in his/her list.

The family doctors must be in permanent contact with their enlisted persons and provide a certain range of services. We speak here especially about the profilactic component. Usually we look at people when they are ill and they get to the hospital, without doing this while they are at home, in order to prevent an illness.

The hospitalization period will be decreased. After surgical interventions, for example, the patients who don't have relatives will be treated at home, either by the general practitioner or by a community nurse.

Promoting the legislative package regarding the sanitary system reform represents an important step for the accomplishment of the assumed commitments of the present Government, in this area, in the Governing Program. In proportion of 90%, these laws transpose the foresights of the Governing Program in the area of health.

The debates around the health reform laws were taking place for 52 days – the “most ample public debate” regarding a legislative package in the health area.

The law on the reform in the area of Health was adopted in the Parliament through the procedure of assumed governmental responsibility.

The reform of the sanitary system means also the reform of the mental health system in Romania. The mental health represents now an assumed national priority, from medical, social and political point of view.

The Romanian Government, through its institutions (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and Defense, Child Protection, the Secretariat for Disabled People, the Association for Human Rights etc.)

started the reform of the mental health system and has made considerable efforts to improve the existing situation in this area.

Although the Romanian authorities have given lately considerable attention to the mental health sector, the progress, especially in the area of **insuring appropriate care within institutions and of alternate community services for the persons with mental disabilities, are not at European standards.**

At present there are enough deficiencies regarding the specialized care and support, for children as well as for adults with mental disabilities. The sanitary authorities are aware of these deficiencies and they want to eliminate them as soon as possible.

In order to carry out the reform in the system, Ministry of Health has already taken a series of measures:

- During this year, **Ministry of Health allocated more funds for this system. The allocated budget for the National Psychiatry Program increased five times, from 20 billion lei to 100 billion lei.** The money is spent for creating 8 community mental health pilot centers, and for the partial rehabilitation of 6 psychiatric hospitals of the MoH
- **The Mental Health National Strategy** has been developed
- **The National Action Plan in mental health** has been developed, with European assistance. This foresees terms and precise responsibilities within the system for 2006 – 2008. The Action Plan aims at moving the center of interest from the hospital services towards the community services
- MoH representatives have also **finalized the norms of application of the mental health law.** These norms will solve the human rights issues noticed by the international organizations

- **The National Center for Mental Health is about to be established.** The Order regarding the establishment of the National Center of Mental Health as a strategic unit of Ministry of Health in the area has been developed
- **All the patients from the psychiatry units and from those under the ANPH authority will be evaluated.** An order of the Minister of Health has already been elaborated in this regard
- **The MoH representatives drew up and will present to the Romanian Government, in the near future, a Memorandum regarding the financing needs of the psychiatry system**
- **The Ministry of Health is preoccupied to increase the number of specialists and to improve the professional education of those who are active now in the mental health area.** In this regard, a ministerial order stipulating the emergency organization of a psychiatry internship was developed. This way, 300 new psychiatrists will be trained, covering the existing need. The same time, the training curriculum in psychiatry shall be revised and up-dated. An accent will be put on legal aspects and respecting the human rights in order to change mentalities in society and in the system
- The Ministry of Health has now **a strategy for training the managers of the psychiatric units and the medium level medical personnel**
- **The inclusion of the affected persons in society.** Activities in this area will be completed together with the Association of Medical Journalists, in order to promote the de-stigmatization programs aimed to include in society the persons with psychiatric disorders
- **At this moment, 50 centers of community medical care are being established, by transforming the previous mental health laboratories.** Through these centers the social insertion of the people with mental disabilities will be done, in the modern meaning of therapy within the society.