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ЕВРОПЕЙСКА АСОЦИАЦИЯ НА СТАРШИТЕ БОЛНИЧНИ ЛЕКАРИ**

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Swedish national report

Cross-border Health Care

In Sweden medical care is financed by taxes and managed, on a non-profit base, primarily by regional health authorities (the politically elected county councils, the *landsting*). The private health sector is growing but from a low level compared with many other Member States.

Until 2004, health care in Sweden was commonly believed to be an area separated from EU-cooperation and the health authorities adopted a “wait-and-see policy”. Few patients and health professionals had knowledge of the individuals right to seek health care in other EU-countries.

This drastically changed as the Swedish Supreme Court, in disagreement with the National Social Insurance Board, named three patients that, according to previous rulings of the European Court of Justice, had the rights to seek healthcare on the European market outside Sweden. This judgment came unexpectedly to the Swedish politicians who had not prepared any adjustments of the Swedish regulations.

Today the national health insurance system informs and gives forehand approval of the patient’s rights to healthcare in other Member States although little have been done, by way of publicity, to make general public aware of their rights. There is also a lack of knowledge within the medical profession.

Sweden is currently adjusting its health care system to the new policy on Cross-border Health care but at present there is no clearly formulated structure in place for reimbursements.

Legislation is prepared and proposes so far:

- You must be a Swedish citizen to be entitled to reimbursement.
- The treatment must be evidence-based by Swedish standards.
- The treatment must be equivalent to that offered by the regional health authorities.
- In most cases an application must be approved in advance.
- The regional health authorities must reimburse its citizens.

The Swedish Medical Association fears that the restrictive legislation will become a certain hindrance to medical progress on the European level. Cross-border health has a strong potential in initiating new important ways of medical cooperation within the EU although the risks of malpractice and threats against the safety patient should not be neglected.

On the national level the Swedish Medical Association stresses the importance of equal opportunities for all citizens and therefore suggests a national board for decisions on policies and rules for reimbursement of treatments given outside the count

Doctors crossing borders

There is an increasing number of physicians from other countries applying for Swedish medical authorization. In 2007 the total amount of issued “registrations” were **2211**, divided into
816 with basic medical education from Sweden
1134 with basic medical education from EU/EES
261 with basic medical education from outside EU (mostly refugees)