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EUROPÄISCHE VEREINIGUNG DER LEITENDEN KRANKENHAUSÄRZTE
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ASOCIATIA EUROPEANA A MEDICILOR DIN SPITALE**

Document :	AEMH 10-035
Title:	Declaration “Towards non-discriminatory access to healthcare”
Author :	Doctors of the World – Médecins du Monde
Purpose :	Adoption
Distribution :	AEMH Member Delegations
Date :	3 May 2010

From: Benoit Blondel [Benoit.Blondel@MedecinsduMonde.be]
Sent: 30 April 2010 14:53
To: jmdeus@gmail.com
Cc: secretariat@aemh.org
Subject: "Towards non-discriminatory access to health care" - Health professionals' declaration

Dear Dr Joao de Deus,

Doctors of the World, better known as Médecins du Monde, initiated in 2008 a European network, called 'HUMA network' (www.huma-network.org), currently present in 13 European countries, which aim is to improve access to health care for undocumented migrants and asylum seekers [1].

We are very much convinced of the role that doctors - and more generally health professionals - can play in this respect, and of the need to work with health professionals' structures.

This is why we decided to mobilise and raise awareness among health professionals collectively (medical organisations, hospitals,...) and individually, at a European scale, for a better access to health care for undocumented migrants and for the respect of their deontology, and this through a public declaration, 'Towards non-discriminatory access to health care', which will be widely disseminated.

Please find herewith the text of this declaration. It is largely based on a position paper of CPME "Access to health care for undocumented migrants" (CPME 2008/109), and CPME has already decided to support our initiative by signing this declaration.

Before the formal launch of this declaration, and in order to have it successfully launched, we seek the support of prominent European medical organisations. Would AEMH be ready to give this declaration its support?

AEMH's support really would give this initiative a boost and be a concrete step to ensure that the issues this declaration raises are effectively tackled.

I remain at your full disposal for any question you might have as regards this initiative, and am looking forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Benoît Blondel
Policy Officer

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Towards non-discriminatory access to health care

Health professionals' declaration

Undocumented migrants face many problems in access to health care in a large majority of European Union member states. These problems are due to laws restricting or eliminating health coverage. They are also due to the complexity of the health system but they also exist because of the fear of being arrested or denounced, because of being refused health care, or because of other discriminations.

This situation goes against our professional ethics which reminds us that "every person is entitled without discrimination to appropriate medical care"¹. This professional code of ethics highlights that: "physicians and other persons or bodies involved in the provision of health care have a joint responsibility to recognize and uphold these rights. Whenever legislation, government action or any other administration or institution denies patients these rights, physicians should pursue appropriate means to assure or to restore them"².

In view of this situation

We, health care professionals involved in the provision of health care,

Reassert our loyalty to our professional ethics that asks us to care for all patients without discrimination. We ask to be able to perform our professional responsibilities with the utmost respect for our ethics.

As a consequence, we

1/ ASK THAT health care professionals should be able to determine in a given situation what health care should be provided to their patient, without any restrictions linked to their residency status (as to the type and/or extent of health care treatment).

2/ ASK THAT the provision of health care to undocumented individuals be paid for by public funds when these people cannot afford to pay. We also ask that organizational impediments for health professionals and health institutions to provide health care to undocumented migrants be taken away.

3/ REMIND that health professionals and health institutions are free to provide services to undocumented migrants. We refuse to denounce any undocumented migrants to (immigration) authorities. We also refuse any criminalisation of providing health care services to undocumented migrants.

4/ HIGHLIGHT the need that both health professionals and undocumented migrants be fully aware of (and informed of) all existing possibilities to provide health care to undocumented migrants.

First signatories:

¹ [World Medical Assembly Declaration on the Rights of the Patient](#), adopted by the 34th World Medical Assembly (September-October 1981), 1st principle.

² [World Medical Assembly Declaration on the Rights of the Patient](#), preamble.