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At present the reform of the national health care system is taking place in Slovakia. New legislative regulations dealing with the system of insurance, control of providers of health care, professional organisations, etc. are being prepared. They are supposed to be adopted by the Slovak Parliament during the first half of the year 2004.

In the last year a considerable number of hospitals in Slovakia have been transformed from state hospitals into county or city ones. The change has not brought any dramatic improvement yet - neither in working conditions and the salaries of doctors nor in the quality of provided health care. Most of the hospitals are (still producing debts) unable to improve conditions for their staff. Several private hospitals, however, are doing well. It appears that one of the problems in city/county hospitals is low quality of their management. Therefore some of existing city hospitals are going to be sold to private companies.

Another problem is a lack of funds in the health care system. According to the ministry of health care the patients' participation in the direct financing of health care should provide an additional source of money. At the moment a list of the diagnoses that will be partially or fully covered directly by a patient or by their (non health) insurance service is being made.

An effort of the ministry of health care to search for more effective alternatives have resulted in creating conditions for introducing one day surgery (ODS). A few departments, mainly private ones, have already started to provide ODS. Since there is a little tradition with ODS in Slovakia, Slovak Medical Chamber recommends to get all the necessary information concerning its organisation, condition of providing, maintaining quality and possible pitfalls from the countries where ODS is well established. An international symposium organised on the corresponding topic would be beneficial.

The continuing outflow of specialists still persists. It has not caused any manpower problem yet but its increase is expected to be more apparent when Slovakia becomes a member of EU in May 2004.

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