



ΩΦΕΛΕΕΙΝ Η ΜΗ ΒΛΑΡΤΕΙΝ

Ε Λ Λ Η Ν Ι Κ Η Δ Η Μ Ο Κ Ρ Α Τ Ι Α

**NATIONAL REPORT OF GREECE TO THE AEMH
PANHELLENIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
AEMH Plenary Assembly,
10-11 May 2024, BERLIN, Germany**

The situation in Greece is improving, nevertheless doctors continue to face serious chronic problems but also new ones.

Task shifting is a permanent trend and a recent example is the authorisation of pharmacists to practice vaccinations.

The Panhellenic Medical Association addressed a serious issue that Greek self-employed doctors (in private practice) with a state contract for the provision of medical healthcare services have been confronting with, asking for the support of the EMOs. Because of the clawback and rebate mechanisms the result is that the amount that is paid to doctors is often reduced up to 75%. This is a seriously threatening the survival of many doctors owned medical laboratories.

After consultations, a new law has passed, offering the possibility to public hospital doctors to work in the private sector and privately working doctors to sign contracts for part time work in public hospitals.

According to the provisions of the new Law, the right to prescribe to uninsured patients extends to the family (personal) doctors.

Another Draft Bill if voted will administratively separate psychiatric departments from the general hospitals.

A positive development is the increase by 20% gross (about 15% net) of public hospital doctors' salary and on duty remuneration.

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Recently, a provision was included in Greek Law 5090/2024 on penal codes, article 33, providing for stricter penalties for those who commit acts of violence against healthcare workers. Under this new code, such acts of violence are punished with 1 up to 2 years of imprisonment and a monetary penalty. This provision is the result of persistent and considerable pressure on the competent Ministries, by the Panhellenic Medical Association (PhMA).

In addition to the above mentioned, it is noted that especially with regard to the operation of the National Health System in Greece, the following problems still exist.

1. Personal (family) doctor. One in two residents still not covered by a public family doctor. The entire child population of the country remains uninsured.
2. Understaffing of doctors. The number of doctors in public service hospitals is still insufficient, so there are many thousands of vacancies (estimated at more than 6000).
3. Low salaries of doctors. Greece has still the lowest salaries for doctors in the National Health System throughout Europe (with the exception of Bulgaria). Despite the latest increases the entry salary of qualified doctors remains around 2000 euros gross (net approx. 1700 euros). Although final judicial decisions of the Supreme Court of the country call the state to proceed with salary increases for doctors, they did not have been applied (the nominal loss in doctors' annual income since 2009 it is estimated around 50%, without taking into account the inflation).
4. Working hours. Although since 2017 the European Guidelines have been legislated directive on the maximum weekly working time of doctors, there are systematic deviations with over- work almost for the set of doctors. The Panhellenic Medical Association intends to appeal to EU institutions for the circumvention of EU Directives for the maximum weekly working time.
5. Poorly populated and distant insular areas. Although medical care is constitutionally foreseen, massive shortages of doctors are observed in the healthcare structures of some islands and some isolated continental areas. Special incentives for attracting and keeping doctors to the islands, even though foreseen, have not yet been legislated.

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6. Brain drain. Thousands of doctors have left Greece the last twelve years without any legislated plan for their repatriation.
7. Additionally, Greece still has an extremely large private sector health expenditure, while the state financing in GDP percentage of the health system remains below the European average.

As a result of the above in a recent polling study of Panhellenic Medical Association, all indicators of acceptance and satisfaction vis-à-vis the National Health System seem to be deteriorating, in doctors' opinion as well as in the opinion of the general population.

Even worse, the latest legislative interventions (like the proclaimed psychiatric "reform") do not seem to meet the acceptance of the majority of doctors or health service users.

It seems that the National Health System in Greece is at a critical juncture path of mutation, without having secured the necessary social consent and without considering the reactions of medical community.

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