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EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF SALARIED DOCTORS**

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1. reduction of working time

The Austrian Federal Body of employed doctors has recently conducted a survey among hospital doctors, where, in view of the current situation, the question concerning the maximum working period has been included to the questionnaire. The outcome of the survey shows that a high percentage (three quarters) of the interviewees have spoken in favor of a reduction of working hours. Long hospital shifts are regarded as critical both in terms of employee-protection and patient safety. The Austrian Medical Chamber therefore calls for a limitation of working hours to a maximum of 25 hours per hospital shift.

2. Hospitals: Present niveau must be kept! No „Double-Primariats“!

Austrian authorities plan to reduce the minimum Standards of hospitals, to save money. Therefore so called “reduced organization-units” shall be invented with reduced medical staff.

The Austrian medical Chamber is strictly against this plan. A house, that is called “hospital” must include a real hospital, otherwise the medical niveau will be reduced and it will become unattractive to be treated as a patient and as doctor to work in smaller “reduced” hospitals.

Secondly the Austrian medical Chamber is strongly against the proposal, introduced by Minister of Health, Alois Stöger, that in the future, chief physicians shall be responsible for more than one senior management position.

The Austrian federal body of employed doctors therefore came to the unanimous conclusion that the Act on medical care establishments and on health resorts shall be amended in order to prevent deterioration of quality of health care.

Chief physicians, who have to hold more than one senior management position won't be able to focus on the specific areas of activity which eventually might lead to a negative influence on the performance, training of doctors in training and the quality of healthcare.

3. EHR (electronic health records)

In Austria, a major legal act which aims at establishing a national system of electronic health records (EHR, “ELGA”) is currently under review.

The Federal Ministry of Health has recently submitted a draft law for consultation which is harshly criticised by the Austrian Medical Chamber and also other stakeholders. The draft in its present form would not bring about significant improvement to the current situation, in fact, it will complicate the doctor-patient communication. Furthermore, it does not offer sufficient protection of health data against unauthorized access. Given the highly sensitive nature of health related data, however, it must be ensured that this kind of information is not misused.

The Austrian Medical Chamber would rather await the results and experience gained from the pilot project (eMedication, scheduled to run until the end of 2011) before any decision is taken.

All open questions have to be clarified before the draft is adopted by parliament, particularly questions with regard to costs, benefit, liability or data protection. These questions are still unsolved.

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