



EFN POSITION STATEMENT ON THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS ON PATIENT SAFETY AND HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS

The EFN welcomes the Council Recommendations on Patient Safety and Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAIs), which shows there is a political commitment at European level.

Taking into account the EFN Position Statement on Patients' Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare, and the input EFN provided to DG Sanco consultation on Patient Safety and HCAIs, the EFN believes that the Council Recommendations on Patient Safety and HCAIs are a crucial step forward in making healthcare safe for patients and their families.

"Investing in Nurses – Investing in Safety"

Therefore, the EFN believes that the Recommendations should:

- Maintain the highest standards of cleanliness, hygiene and asepsis;
- Strengthen a European framework to better prevent the causes of infections so that patients and their families are assured a safe hospital stay in the European Union;
- Promote the development of better information gathering systems in order to efficiently evaluate progress towards reducing adverse events incidents by 20%;
- Acknowledge the important role of link nurses working in the clinical settings (in the Hospital and community sector) and encourage the recruitment of specialist infection control nurses; and,
- Support the multi-disciplinary approach to infection control with teams across a range of settings and professions working together to prevent infection.

Furthermore, there is an important link with the EU Patients' Rights Cross-Border Healthcare Directive, in particular article 5, and the Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health.

Therefore, the EFN believes that:

1. Patients' Rights in Healthcare need to be strengthened by implementing a patient-centred approach;
2. Appropriate staffing levels and better management of staff workloads should be just as important as hand hygiene and environmental cleanliness in the battle to recognise and prevent the causes of healthcare associated infections;
3. High Quality of Care and Safety Standards throughout the EU are essential to make progress together with appropriate investment in link nurses and specialist infection control nurses.

Finally, investment in infection prevention and control is crucial, with the emphasis on prevention rather than reacting when things go wrong. The EFN members call on their governments and the European Commission to provide the proper investment for more specialist infection prevention nurses, link nurses and effective and efficient blame free reporting systems. Social cohesion funds should be used to implement the Council recommendations.

EFN Position Statement – April 2009

**European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN)
Registration Number 476.356.013
Clos du Parnasse 11A, 1050 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 512 74 19 Fax: +32 2 512 35 50
Email: efn@efn.be Website: www.efnweb.eu**