

Friday 25 October 2013

## **Cross-border Healthcare Directive comes into force today**

As of today, it will be easier for patients to seek medical care in the EU country of their choice and claim reimbursement.

This is made possible by the Directive on cross-border healthcare, adopted in 2011 and which comes into force October 25<sup>th</sup> across all 28 European Union Member States.

This Directive comes on top of existing social security laws enabling patients to claim reimbursement for unexpected care received while abroad (e.g. on holidays) and planned treatments.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, reacted:

“Although the majority of patients prefer to receive care in their home country, some might choose to cross a border to be treated by a certain specialist for example. This directive finally gives them the right to do so.

“This new law is a milestone for patients’ rights in Europe. It benefits not only those who seek healthcare abroad, but also those who choose to seek healthcare in their own country.

“For the first time, EU legislation requires Member States to thoroughly inform patients on their rights, on reimbursement and complaint procedures, and whether a health care provider is fit for practice.

“On top of supplying clear information on prices, each doctor or hospital must inform patients on the availability and safety of care. Having a drug prescription recognised by a pharmacist in another country will be hassle-free too. It is now over to Member States to keep the system up and running.”

ENDS

For further information, see the European Commission’s Q&A on Patients’ Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-13-918 en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-918_en.htm?locale=en)