

EUROPEAN DECLARATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Towards non-discriminatory access to health care

Undocumented migrants face many problems in access to health care in a large majority of European Union member states. These problems are due to laws restricting or eliminating health coverage. They are also due to the complexity of the health system but they also exist because of the fear of being arrested or denounced, because of being refused health care, or because of other discriminations.

This situation goes against our professional ethics which reminds us that every person is entitled without discrimination to appropriate health care. Health professionals' ethics highlight that "*physicians and other persons or bodies involved in the provision of health care have a joint responsibility to recognize and uphold the rights of the patient*".^{*} Whenever legislation, government action or any other administration or institution denies patients these rights, health professionals should pursue appropriate means to assure or to restore them.

In view of this situation,

WE, HEALTH PROFESSIONALS,

Reassert our commitment to our professional ethics that asks us to care for all patients without discrimination. We ask to be able to perform our professional responsibilities with the utmost respect to our professional ethics.

As a consequence, we :

- 1** **Ask that** health professionals should be able to determine in a given situation what health care should be provided to their patient, without any restrictions linked to their residency status (as to the type and/or extent of health care treatment).
- 2** **Ask that** the provision of health care to undocumented migrants be paid for by public funds when these people cannot afford to pay. We also ask that organizational impediments for health professionals and health institutions to provide health care to undocumented migrants be taken away.
- 3** **Remind** that health professionals and health institutions are free to provide services to undocumented migrants. We refuse to denounce any undocumented migrants to (immigration) authorities. We also refuse any criminalisation of providing health care services to undocumented migrants.
- 4** **Highlight** the need that both health professionals and undocumented migrants be fully informed all existing possibilities to provide health care to undocumented migrants.

^{*} World Medical Association Declaration on the Rights of the Patient, adopted by the 34th World Medical Assembly (September-October 1987)