



EFN POSITION PAPER ON THE CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) represents over one million nurses and is the independent voice of the profession. The mission of EFN is to promote the interests, status and practice of the profession of nursing in the EU.

The average life expectancy in the EU is one of the highest in the world, and is continuing to rise. Health systems must adjust to this change in European demography. In addition, care services for older people need to be responsive to individual needs.

Nurses are the largest occupational group in the health care sector and provide the majority of direct care; therefore they have a critical role in providing preventative and acute care, initiating change at local level and aiding organisations to develop services with older people in mind.

EFN calls on the Commission and the European Parliament to:

- Strengthen patients' and citizens' rights in European legislation;
- Ensure that the provision of health services to older people recognise the right to dignified care;
- Provide a legal base for EU health policy in the EC Treaty to enable the Council and the Parliament to pursue more pro-active EU health care and public health policy;
- Inform EU citizens about their health care rights and the quality assurance of services provided by health care professionals;
- Guarantee the compatibility between European social policy and the free market principles;
- Follow up the Gothenburg European Council outcome calling on the Commission to prepare a progress report on guidelines in the field of health care for older people;
- Continue reforms to ensure that adequate financing is provided for older people care and active ageing;
- Establish European education standards for health care professionals and promote co-operation between health care institutions in order to provide appropriate healthcare services by competent professionals based on evidence based research; and,
- Develop EU legislation that ensures appropriate nurse / patient ratios in health services for older people; quality services and patient morbidity are directly proportionate with nurse staffing levels. Staffing levels should be based on scientific evidence of skill mix and workload measurements which take into account the different needs of older people.

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The 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.org