

# Migrant-friendly hospitals – Network of hospitals for the migrant population (MFH)

A project from the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (SFOPH) and H+ Association of Swiss Hospitals

## Final Conference of the European project Migrant-Friendly Hospitals

Hospitals in a culturally-diverse Europe  
International conference on quality-assured health care and health promotion for migrants and ethnic minorities  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands, December 9-11, 2004

### 1. Introduction

Switzerland has a high-quality but expensive healthcare system which ensures access to safe healthcare for all as a matter of principle. The federal government and 26 cantons share the responsibility for public health which results in a complex legal and factual healthcare structure. Hospital policy and hospital care are essentially matters of cantonal responsibility. There are around 229 public and 136 private hospitals and special clinics. 28% of the Swiss population has a migration background.

It is a prime objective of the Swiss health system to guarantee for everyone an equal chance of getting appropriate healthcare services. In order to achieve this objective, the Federal Council has launched a strategic orientation for the years 2002 to 2007 with 5 axes of intervention: education (basic education, advanced and continuing training); public information, prevention and health promotion; healthcare provision; treatment for traumatised asylum seekers; research (basic research, assessment and monitoring).

### 2. The project

The project Migrant-friendly hospitals- A network of hospitals for the migrant population (MFH) is based on a contract between the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health and H+ Association of Swiss Hospitals. The contract duration is Dec 1, 2003 – Nov 30, 2006.

#### 2.1. The **objectives** are as follows:

- Creating a network of hospitals which are recognised for their special expertise in providing healthcare to the migrant population.
- Transferring knowledge and know-how by exchanging the experiences of the directly involved doctors, nurses, administrators.
- Working out recommendations for “best practice” standards of cross-cultural expertise.
- Encouraging and supporting innovative cross-cultural projects of hospitals through financial backing.

#### 2.2. The project work is based on the following **basic assumptions**:

- Guarantee quality of care by virtue of cross-cultural skills.
- Ensure excellence of hospital staff in the “management of diversity” of all hospital processes. Migrant friendliness means patient friendliness. Understand diversity as “treasure” and a source of renewal.
- Examine special offers for (parts of) the migrant population very seriously. Secure sustainability. Do not create any (new) discrimination.
- High quality of care, good management of diversity and strict attention to the concerns of the migrant population at all levels of the hospital leads to an increase in efficiency and produces a competitive edge.

2.3. The **principle arrangements** for the project work are:

- Collaboration in the network is on a voluntary basis.
- Experiences at hospitals in caring for the migrant population have to be taken into account.
- The project should support the hospital staff in mastering their duties and generate real added-value to them.
- The project should encourage hospitals to networking with pre-and post-hospital service providers.
- Financed projects will be assessed.
- The network is to be institutionalised in a yet-to-be-determined form.

2.4 **State of work**

4 Working groups are at work for developing recommendations for the hospitals to be issued later in 2005:

- Working group 1: Patient processes
- Working group 2: Hospital strategy
- Working group 3: Language, communication, information
- Working group 4: Empowerment of hospital staff

**3. Start – up financing**

The project manager may grant start-up financing for individual projects of hospitals. The criteria applied are published on the project’s website.

**4. Project organisation**



The project organisation is kept simple. The project leader is working with the 4 working groups composed of hospital staff members. There is an advisory council composed of migration experts, representatives of NGO’s and the cantons.




**5. Open issues**

The presentation draws the attention to some open issues which have to be dealt with in the course of the project, for example: will we succeed in convincing hospital managements that being migrant-friendly ultimately means being patient-friendly? How will the increasing number of illegal immigrants be integrated into the healthcare system? Is it possible to adapt the public health regulatory framework in such a way that it “pays” to be a migrant-friendly hospital?

**6. Links**

Link to Migrant-Friendly hospitals – Hospital network for the migrant population (MFH)

[www. hplus.ch](http://www.hplus.ch)  Direct access  Migrant-Friendly Hospitals (MFHs) or

[www. hplus.ch](http://www.hplus.ch)  Service  Links  Migrant-Friendly Hospitals (MFHs)

e-mail: [peter.saladin@hplus.ch](mailto:peter.saladin@hplus.ch) or [spitalnetzwerk-MFH@hplus.ch](mailto:spitalnetzwerk-MFH@hplus.ch)