

## **Health In Europe - A Strategic Approach - Consultation on the Proposed EU Health Strategy**

Comments:

Alan Cunningham- Community Public Health Representative- East Liverpool

The proposed EU Health Strategy could be strengthened by the creation of a Europe wide citizen information portal such as that, which already exists within the World Health Organisation (WHO) (websites and publications) including Healthy Cities- Urban Health Topics. The WHO Information Portal exists mainly to support health professionals. There is a need for a similar information structure to support EU citizens and other decision makers

Whilst knowledge about the economic and social determinants of health is improving, health inequalities persist and may be increasing in some parts of the EU. Dissemination of the available state of knowledge remains poor. Decision makers within Civic Society as well as EU Citizens remain poorly informed, also the existing state of knowledge about health and about the determinants of health is very unequally distributed.\*\* This means that decisions affecting people's lives are often taken without a full appreciation of the consequent health impacts. This is likely to affect; solidarity, security, cohesion and prosperity. EU Citizens may be prevented from making a good mix of choices to realize their full health potential and that they are prevented from achieving a good quality of life. This situation could be improved by the creation of the proposed Europe wide Health Information Portal

The introduction of such a Health Information Portal would provide scope for action on core issues which are to be addressed by the Strategy including in particular

- 2) Helping to reduce health inequalities and narrowing health gaps within and between countries.
- 3) Supporting citizens and patients including by making more healthy choices and by improving information to patients
- 5) Promoting health and helping to address key health determinants, such as nutrition and physical activity, harmful alcohol consumption and smoking as well as tackling important challenges such as mental health.

### **Health In All Policy**

Decision making at every level affecting health would be improved by the better dissemination of available knowledge.

### **Democratic Theory**

The EU citizen is the final owner of the proposed strategy under democratic theory. As far as possible knowledge provided under the proposed Strategy and knowledge, which supports it's better implementation should be available to him or her in a way that he or she can use.

### **Quality Considerations**

Quality considerations: The concept of quality as fitness for purpose for the end user suggest that ordinary EU citizens should have access to available knowledge about health and the determinants of health as far as it is possible to support the effective execution of the Strategy

### **Contents:**

It is suggested that the proposed citizen information portal would include topics identified by the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, chaired by Sir Michael Marmot, topics identified by the earlier WHO study; Social Determinants of Health, the Solid Facts (Marmot and Wilkinson), other material identified as relevant to health under the Healthy Cities Programme (Urban Health Topics) also other work identified as relevant to Health under the United Nations Agreement on the Environment (Agenda21) Such topics might include;

### **Nutrition**

Transport

Movement (As per WHO Movement Strategy)

Health aspects of work

Health aspects of unemployment

Mothers and Children

Key transitions in the life cycle

Old Age

Housing

Addiction

Energy

Access to the countryside and green spaces

Planning

Pollution including atmospheric pollution

Environmental toxins

Could you please give this proposal your consideration? Please acknowledge receipt. Please identify a named official whom I can contact to obtain feedback.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this consultation

Alan Cunningham (31.1.07)

\*\*( In Britain, employers, trade unions, cultural organizations, faith communities, anti-poverty groups, groups working for a more sustainable society and community groups can be demonstrated to be acting without a full understanding of health policy and without a full understanding of the available evidence about the social and economic determinants of health)

References:

Health21 –health for all in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century European Health for All Series No 6- The health for all policy framework for the WHO European Region. Isbn 92 890 1349 4

World Wide Web Address: <http://www.who.dk>

**City planning for health and sustainable development WHO Regional Office for Europe, European Commission, Healthy Cities Network, European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign isbn 92 890 12846**

**The Social Determinants of Health, the Solid Facts – (WHO Europe) ((www.sho.dk)**

**Edited by Richard Wilkinson & Michael Marmot**

Multiple Deprivation Indicators 2004 –Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Ottawa Charter For Health Promotion – WHO 1986

Web Address [http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/ottawa\\_charter\\_hp.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/ottawa_charter_hp.pdf)

Settings for Health Promotion – Linking Theory and Practice Poland, Green& Rootman Sage

## Publications

Promoting Health Knowledge and Practice –Edited by Jeanne Katz, Alyson Peberdy & Jenny Douglas

Palgrave / Open University

Inequalities in Health – Report – Chair Sir Donald Acheson. HMSO

Securing Our Future Health: Taking A Long Term View = Report (2002), Chair Sir. Derek Wanless

Securing Good Health for the Whole Population-Final Report (2004)-Chair Sir Derek Wanless

Tackling Health Inequalities: Status Report on the Programme for Action –Sir Michael Marmot  
Department of Health

Unlocking the Extent of Local Inequalities in Health – Dr Sohail S Bhatti Director of Public Health,  
Huddersfield Central PCT & South Huddersfield PCT

In Sickness and in Health 2003 Health Survey for Greater Merseyside Professor Simon Capewell, Dr  
Ffion Lloyd-Williams and Robin Ireland University of Liverpool –Heart of Mersey

Unhealthy Societies –The Afflictions of Inequality Richard G. Wilkinson Routledge

Labour Market Shocks, Psychosocial Stress and the Transition's Mortality Crisis – Giovanni Andrea  
Cornia – The Verona Initiative –WHO Europe (1998)

The Healthy Community Concept, Holistic Development and Human Capital – Trevor Hancock .

This paper represents the views of its author on the subject. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission's or Health & Consumer Protection DG's views. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.