

**High Level Parliamentary Seminar on
Improving the Performance of Health Systems
19 February, 2004**

A high-level parliamentary seminar “Improving the Performance of Health Systems” took place 19 February 2004 at the OECD” in order to:

- share with parliamentarians the emerging results of the OECD health study;
- listen to their views on the challenges of implementing necessary reforms in health systems;
- seek parliamentarians’ views and support for building the necessary political will to push this agenda forward.

Background

The OECD has for a long time been a leader in the production of comparative policy relevant statistics on health and health financing for OECD countries.

Health spending now accounts for an average of more than 8% of GDP in member countries and the economic importance of this sector has grown considerably over the past several decades. OECD countries are grappling with issues of how to assure affordable systems with sustainable financing, maintain equitable access to services, attain better health outcomes, increase responsiveness to consumer expectations, and improve value for money.

In 2001, the OECD launched a major three-year study: “*the OECD Health Project*” to address some of these challenges. Results from the Project will be presented to OECD Health Ministers at their meeting on 13/14 May 2004. It will also be a key component of OECD Forum 2004, *Health of Nations*, which will take place on 12/13 May.

Some of the principal conclusions emerging from the OECD health study are:

- All OECD countries face rising health costs.
- This reflects: improvements in medical technology, and population ageing, which are putting pressure on public budgets
- There has been a general trend towards improved access to care
- There have been dramatic improvements in health outcomes but not enough attention is paid to preventive as opposed to curative actions
- Improvements in the quality of care have not always been linked to higher spending
- There is great scope for improving health systems efficiency

Parliamentarians have a key role to play in helping governments and societies to develop creative policy approaches to improve the performance of their health systems.

List of participants

Name		Country	Affiliation
Eero	AKAAN-PENTTILÄ	Finland	National Coalition Party
Hugh	BAYLEY	United Kingdom	House of Commons ; Member Select Committee on International Development ; Chair , NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Trade Sub-Committee
Irena	BEHOLHORSKA	Republic of Slovakia	Senator
Léon	BENOIT	Canada	Député à la chambre des communes
Kurt	BODEWIG	Germany	Member of Parliament Bundestag
Segundo	BRU	Spain	Member of NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Harry	COHEN	United Kingdom	Member of Parliament (Labour Party)
Ramon	COMPANYS	Portugal	Member NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Paul	COOK	Belgium	Director, Committee on Economics and Security, NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Jane	CORDY	Canada	Member of Parliament (CDN)
Benedetto	DELLA VEDOVA	Italy	Member of European Parliament ; Member of Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Jimmy	DEVINS T.D.	Ireland	Member of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Health and Children
Claude	EVIN	France	Député de Loire Atlantique à l'assemblée nationale

Name		Country	Affiliation
Ivan	FARKAS	Republic of Slovakia	Member of Parliament, Associate of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Imre	FRAJNA	Hungary	Member of Parliament ((fidesz-MPSZ), Member of the parliament's health Committee.
Mike	GAPES	United Kingdom	House of Commons ; Former Member of Select Committees on Foreign Affairs and Defense
John	GORMLEY	Ireland	Member of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Health and Children
Yves	GUISAN	Switzerland	Member, National Council of Switzerland
José	LELLO	Portugal	Member NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Pierre	LELLOUCHE	France	Député de Paris (4è) à l'assemblée nationale
Pehr	LÖV	Finland	Swedish Parliamentary Group
Simon	LUNN		Secretary-General of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Lydia	MADERO	Mexico	Senator
Gianni	NIEDDU	Italy	NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Bat	O'KEEFFE T.D.	Ireland	Chair of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Health and Children
Ovidiu Cameliu	PETRESCU	Romania	Member of Parliament and Head of the Romanian delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Virgil	POPA	Romania	
David	PRICE	Canada	Member of Parliament and Head

Name		Country	Affiliation
			of the Canadian delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Carlos	RODRIGUES	Portugal	Member NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Tibor	SCHWARCZ	Hungary	Member of Parliament (socialist), Chairman of the parliament's health Committee
John	SMITH	United Kingdom	Member NATO Parliamentary Assembly