Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 792 (1976)[1]

Institution of an international medical credit card

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that at a time when millions of people are constantly travelling from one European country to another it is necessary to provide medical care with a minimum of on-the-spot financial and administrative formalities, particularly for urgent cases ;

2. Believing that the medical expenses incurred abroad by insured persons and their families should be refunded ;

3. Noting that the existing bilateral agreements and other international multilateral instruments concluded between certain European countries for the purpose of, inter alia, providing sickness benefits for persons abroad do not ensure complete and uniform co-ordination at European level ;

4. Considering, therefore, that it is desirable to elaborate a new convention, covering as many categories of persons as possible and with a wide geographical sphere ;

5. Believing that such a new legal instrument should lead in practice to the establishment and recognition of an international medical expenses form or "credit card" ;

6. Considering further that, in case of accidents, the lack of standard rules of conduct and the absence of certain data often result in deplorable situations where the family or other close relatives of the victim are left uninformed of the accident for several days ;

7. Welcoming the initiative of the Committee of Ministers in including in the Intergovernmental Work Programme an activity for improving methods of co-ordination with regard to questions such as these,

8. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

entrust the competent expert committee with the preparation of a European convention, taking into account the following principles :

a. the provision of essential medical services to nationals of the contracting states temporarily on the territory of other contracting states should be arranged in such a way as to avoid immediate formalities and, so far as possible, substantial cash payments ;

b. the quality of the services provided for foreigners should be based on the best treatment available to nationals ;

c. where cash payments have to be made for medical services by individuals while temporarily on the territory of another state, refunds should be made available through the institution by which they are covered ;

1. Assembly debate on 18 September 1976 (13th Sitting) (see Doc. 3818, report of the Committee on Social and Health Questions). Text adopted by the Assembly on 18 September 1976 (13th Sitting).

d. administrative arrangements should be made for the objectives set out in a, b and c by means, among others, of the institution of a simple durable international form or card, containing the requisite social security data and, where possible, on an optional basis, information on any physical peculiarities of the holder which are of medical significance, and particulars of the person to be notified in case of the holder meeting with an accident ;

examine the possibility of opening such a convention to signature by states not Members of the Council of Europe, including East European states, and, in the case of a policy decision in favour of opening the convention to signature by non-member states, consider at what stage they might be associated with the work of preparing the convention.