



# *Countering Healthcare Fraud and Corruption in Europe*

## *The European Healthcare Fraud and Corruption Declaration*



AGIS 2004

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## Introduction

Resources made available for the provision of healthcare services should not be lost to fraud and corruption. Those who agree this declaration have committed themselves to work together to reduce, and where possible eliminate, fraud and corruption from public and private healthcare systems.

Real, tangible benefits for European healthcare systems can be gained through the implementation of effective mechanisms to reduce losses to healthcare fraud and corruption. To date this has been shown through the positive experience of some member states that have made significant inroads through innovative strategic solutions to tackle the problems of healthcare fraud and corruption.

Through promotion of opportunities, joint working, sharing of good practice and development of common working standards, those who agree this declaration aim to improve European healthcare systems by reducing losses to fraud and corruption, which in turn will produce savings and social benefits through more cost effective delivery of patient care.

## Objectives

Those who agree this declaration consent to the following objectives:

- The development of a European common standard of **RISK MEASUREMENT** (baseline figures), with annual statistically valid follow up exercises to measure progress in reducing losses to fraud and corruption throughout the EU.
- The creation of a real **ANTI-FRAUD** and **ANTI-CORRUPTION CULTURE** within healthcare systems among both healthcare users and service providers and ultimately among all EU citizens. At the forefront of this objective is the development of an understanding of the importance of tackling fraud and corruption in healthcare and one's role and responsibility in this. This objective will be furthered through the raising of awareness on this issue.
- To use all possible presentational and publicity opportunities to act as a **DETERRENT** to those who are minded to engage in healthcare fraud or corruption.
- The use of effective **PREVENTION** systems so that when fraudulent or corrupt activities are attempted, they will fail.
- The use of **DETECTION** systems that will promptly identify occurrences of healthcare fraud and corruption.

- The professional **INVESTIGATION** of all cases of detected or alleged healthcare fraud and corruption
- The imposition, where healthcare fraud or corruption is proven, of appropriate **SANCTIONS** - namely criminal, civil and/or disciplinary processes. Multiple sanctions should be used where possible.
- The seeking of financial **REDRESS** in respect of resources lost to fraud and corruption and the return of recovered resources to the area of patient care or services for which they were intended.

## Commitments

Following the 2004 EHFCC conference, those who agree this declaration will work together through the following initiatives:

- dissemination of anti-fraud and anti-corruption results achieved within each member state's healthcare system.
- development of a communication system of alerts concerning types and methods of fraudulent and corrupt activities.
- organisation of an annual European Healthcare Fraud and Corruption Conference to report and discuss development of fraud and corruption issues.

Those who agree this declaration also call for the creation of a European Healthcare Fraud and Corruption Office (EHFCO). This office will be a not-for-profit, centre of excellence for counter fraud and corruption work. Before the conference in 2005 the EHFCO will lead on the development of this work and, in particular, will:

- develop a secure website dedicated to the development of work on the objectives as listed above and to act as an international reference point on these issues [www.ehfco.org](http://www.ehfco.org) The website will include a password protected area, which is for those who engage in counter fraud and corruption work to exchange information and ideas.
- circulate information, examples of best practice and intelligence to relevant offices and organisations in Member States.

- arrange for, and organise the exchange of staff between relevant organisations in the Member States to encourage learning and the sharing of information.
- undertake research to identify the most efficient methods and optimum legal arrangements to minimise healthcare fraud and corruption within the shortest possible timescale.
- emphasise the commitment to minimise fraud and corruption in the healthcare industry and allow the exchange of experience and information.
- ensure that the highest professional standards are met within this field. The EHFCO will design effective propriety checks for all those Counter Fraud and Corruption Specialists who work within the EU.
- develop a proposed common method of tracking progress against counter fraud and corruption objectives, for consideration and approval at the 2005 conference.
- research the potential of a format for common professional training and qualifications for those engaged in countering healthcare fraud and corruption, for consideration and approval by the 2005 conference.

Future conferences will allow those who agree this declaration the opportunity for re-approval.