



Hospital Network for Care Across Borders in Europe

HoNCAB Network Protocol

WP6: Hospital Network

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Background

In 2011, the **Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (2011/24/EU)** was adopted. This new legislation provides a clarification of patients' rights when they are seeking healthcare in a country of the European Union other than their country of affiliation. It introduces significant changes both for patients and healthcare providers.

With the term "Cross-border healthcare" we refer to situations where European Union citizens seek healthcare in another EU Member State, either to receive planned or emergency care. In such cases, the Directive provides that patients shall be treated under the same conditions as if they were nationals of the Member State of treatment. Besides, patients shall benefit from the same level of reimbursement as if they had been treated in their home country.

This new legislation brings new organisational challenges for healthcare providers, but it represents also a great opportunity for them to attract new patients coming from other Member States.

In this context, the Hospital Network for Care Across Borders in Europe aims at helping its members to tackle these new challenges arising from the Directive, thereby getting a better management of patients' inflows coming from other European Union countries.

The Hospital Network was created in 2012 as part of a project co-funded under the EU Health Programme called HoNCAB (Support creation of pilot network of hospitals related to payment of care for cross-border patients).

The HoNCAB Network has been founded by 9 hospitals from 5 European countries and by the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE). The Network aims to bring together hospitals interested in the issue of cross-border healthcare and to allow the participating members to share their practical experience of the opportunities and critical issues of cross-border care, as well as possible solutions.



Network Protocol

Objectives of the Network

The Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (2011/24/EU) defines cross-border healthcare as healthcare provided or prescribed in a Member State other than the Member State of social security affiliation.

The objectives of the Hospital Network are:

- To **exchange good practices** on the management of cross-border healthcare, problems identified and possible solutions;
- **Access and contribute to the creation of updated and not easily available information on cross-border healthcare**, in order to address the issue of limited data on patients' flow and determinants of patients' mobility.

Core values of the Network's members

The core values of the Network are:

- The respect of EU health systems common values identified in the 2006 Council conclusions on "Common values and principles in EU health system":
 - Universal access to healthcare;
 - Access to good quality care;
 - Equity;
 - Solidarity.
- The respect of the main values for a successful cooperation between partners: professionalism, trust, respect, impartiality and transparency;
- The preservation of the confidentiality of any document, information or other material directly related to the subject of the Network that is classified as confidential, if disclosure could prejudice the members of the Network;
- The respect of patients' informed consent, privacy and choices;
- The commitment to the improvement of the quality of services.



Members of the Network

The current members of the Network can be consulted at the following link:
<http://honcab.eu/network-of-hospitals/network/>

Other European hospitals are able to join the Network and benefit from its activities and results.

Admission requirements and procedure

In order to join the Network, a hospital should:

- Be established in one of the Member States of the European Union or of the European Economic Area;
- Appoint a liaison officer who will act as the main representative and be the contact point for the hospital member;
- Adhere to and respect the *Core values of the Network's members*¹;
- Participate in the activities of the Network.

Whenever a new hospital is willing to become a member of the Network, the following procedures have to be fulfilled:

- The hospital fills in an application form², signs a letter of commitment³ and sends these documents to the secretariat at the following address:

HOPE (European Hospital and Healthcare Federation)
 Avenue Marnix 30
 1000 Brussels
 Belgium

- The Network Management Board examines the application form and decides whether to accept or not the hospital as a new member of the Network on the basis of the above mentioned admission requirements.

¹ See paragraph *Core values of the Network's members*, page 4 of this document.

² See Annex 1, *Application for membership template*.

³ See Annex 2, *Letter of commitment template*.

Network governance

The organs of the HoNCAB Network are the **Network Management Board**, the **Network Plenary Assembly** and the **permanent secretariat**.

Network Plenary Assembly

Composition

The Network Plenary Assembly is made up of **one representative of each hospital composing the Network and the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE) as permanent secretariat**.

If the representative cannot attend a meeting of the Network Plenary Assembly, he/she can be replaced by his/her corresponding substitute, who has the right to represent him/her, to participate in the deliberation and to cast a vote.

Role

The Network Plenary Assembly has the following powers:

- To be consulted by the Network Management Board upon all questions relevant for the mission and the objectives of the Hospital Network;
- To elect the three members of the Network Management Board.

Network Management Board

Composition

The Network Management Board consists of **four members of the Network: three hospitals and the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE) as permanent secretariat**. The three members are elected by the Network Plenary Assembly for a 3 years length.

Role

The role of the Network Management Board is to:

- Guarantee that the core values of the Network are respected⁴;
- Admit new members in the Network;
- Where necessary, following due process, suspend/expel Network members if they fail to respect the *Core values of the Network's members*⁵;

⁴ See paragraph *Core values of the Network's members*, page 4 of this document.

⁵ Ibid

- Modify the Network protocol;
- Decide upon the type of financing of the Network.

Permanent Secretariat

Composition

The permanent Secretariat is run by the **European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE)** and is located in the administrative office of HOPE, in Brussels.

Role

The role of the permanent secretariat is to:

- Liaise with the members of the Network to prepare meetings agendas;
- Coordinate the circulation of relevant documents ahead of and in between meetings;
- Draft and keep a register of minutes;
- Collect application forms from new candidate members;
- Disseminate information to the external public about the HoNCAB Network and its activities.

Procedures for meeting and communication

Every year, at least one meeting of the Network Plenary Assembly shall take place. The Network Management Board shall meet two times per year, before and after the Network Plenary Assembly meeting. These meetings can be face to face or, if not possible, organised by any other means (teleconference, etc.).

For the continuous communication among the members, the Network will use various means of communication and information sharing:

- Web-based application
- Good Practice Guide
- Website
- Emails/Telephone/Other web meeting solutions
- Participation to events

The Network Management Board and the Network Plenary Assembly can only deliberate validly when 50% of the members are present or represented. Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority vote.

Meetings' results are communicated to all members following each meeting. A register of the minutes shall also be kept by the secretariat and may be consulted by the members upon request.

English is the official language for working and communicating within the Network. Members of the network are free to translate network documents in their own language, but only the English version will have legal value.



Benefits for the Network's members

By joining the Network, the members have access to a set of benefits listed below:

- 1) **Improve the management of cross-border healthcare by learning from good practices**, with the possibility to make savings by alleviating the administrative burden resulting from the compliance with the requirements of Directive 2011/24/EU and to attract new patients from abroad

Tools used:

- **Good Practice Guide** regularly updated, which enables the sharing of good practices related to:
 - Pre-admission and admissions;
 - Hospital stay;
 - Discharge, payment and reimbursement.

- 2) **Access and contribute to the creation of updated and not easily available information on cross-border healthcare**

Tools used:

- **Web-based application** which enables the collection of *information on patients' flow* according to pre-defined variables such as socio-demographic, health-related and administration variables;
- **Summary containing information on patients' satisfaction with the quality of the care received and reimbursement**, regularly updated;
- **Information sheets on patients' rights and EU Legislation**, regularly updated.

- 3) **Meet and discuss with peers issues related to cross-border healthcare**

Tools used:

- **Regular meetings** (face to face or virtually) organised within the Network;
- **Newsletter** of the Network released twice a year.

- 4) **Visibility for the hospital**

Tools used:

- **Display member's logo and website's link on the Network official page;**
- Possibility for the member to **include on its own website the logo and the link to the official page of the Network;**
- Award of a **certificate** confirming the status of HoNCAB Network member;
- Gain visibility within the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE) network and consequently at European level.

Activities of the Network's members

Members support the Network by participating in the following activities:

- Data collection made through the *Web-based application* and management of the collected information;
- Periodic reviews of the Good Practice Guide thereby exchanging mutual information on good practices in cross-border healthcare concerning patients' pre-admission and admission, hospital stay, discharge, payment and reimbursement;
- Share of information regarding patients' satisfaction with the quality of the care received and reimbursement on the basis of a collaboration with National Contact Points (NCPs) and other relevant stakeholders and on the basis of information available in the hospitals members of the Network;
- Dissemination to raise awareness on the existence and activities of the Network.



Annex 1: HoNCAB Network – Application for membership

Please complete this form, sign it and send it by postal mail to the following address:

*HOPE (European Hospital and Healthcare Federation)
Avenue Marnix 30
1000 Brussels
Belgium*

Date:

Name of the Hospital:

Country:

Contact details of the Legal Representative:

First Name:

Last name:

Position:

E-mail:

Phone number:

Number of beds (ordinary regimen, both elective and emergency):

Activities/Specialties (vascular surgery, infectious diseases, etc...):
.....

Hospital's Budget:.....

Hospital's Website:.....

N° of EU cross-border patients admitted per year in ordinary regimen, both elective and emergency (please specify the year): (.....)





English-speaking employee appointed as liaison officer for the hospital:

First Name:

Last name:

Position:

E-mail:

Phone number:

Signature of the Legal representative



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Annex 2: Letter of commitment

Please join this document to the Application for membership

[Title and Name of the Legal Representative]

[Name of the organisation]

[Address]

Dear HoNCAB Network Management Board,

This letter confirms the commitment of the organisation I represent [*Please insert name*] to take part in the HoNCAB Network.

With the present letter, I declare that the organisation I represent:

- Agree to the Core values of the Network's members
- Will appoint a liaison officer who will act as a representative and be the contact point for the Hospital Network
- Will participate in the activities of the Network
- Will guarantee the respect of cross-border patients' rights in data protection and confidentiality as well as other related rights while processing their data

Sincerely,

Date, Place

Signature of the Legal Representative

