

PPTA Position Paper

The place of Chronic, congenital diseases within an EU Framework for Health Services

The Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association (PPTA) has followed with great interest the recent developments aimed at improving patient mobility throughout the European Union (EU).

Recent court cases have demonstrated that a framework providing patients with legal certainty about their ability to access healthcare services outside their EU Member State of residence and get reimbursed for these services by their national health insurance was needed.

PPTA's member companies provide life-saving therapies to patients affected by a number of serious conditions, many of them inherited and chronic. PPTA shares the view expressed by both the European Commission and the European Parliament in its Resolution on Patient Mobility that patients should enjoy similar levels of care throughout the European Union.

In this regard, PPTA would encourage the widest access possible to plasma protein therapies. Taking into account the increasing demand for plasma, the supply of plasma protein therapies should be ensured.

Patients who are treated with plasma protein therapies in the EU have at times experienced difficulties accessing proper treatment in their country of residence and have had to travel to another Member State to receive appropriate treatment. For patients with severe conditions, access to treatment can be life-saving.

PPTA would therefore encourage the introduction of a specific provision for rare chronic, congenital life-threatening conditions within the EU legislative proposal. Patients suffering from conditions such as Primary Immunodeficiencies and Haemophilia for example need life-long treatment and frequent administrations of their therapies. Certainly when there is no alternative, the possibility to access care in another Member State should be ensured. However, travelling from one Member State to another to get their treatment is not a practical solution in the long-term for these patient populations. Several examples and surveys have demonstrated that an investment in appropriate levels of treatment reduces costs which would have been otherwise incurred due to an increased rate of hospitalisations, increased number of missed days of work and increased infection rates. This fact and the need to ensure better access to care for these conditions have been widely recognized and underlined at various EU events such as the STOA Panel on Primary Immunodeficiencies on 17 March 2004, the "Haemophilia – Awareness and Disparity of Care within the EU" event at the European Parliament on 12 January 2006 and the European Commission's EU Consensus Conference on Primary Immunodeficiencies in Langen on 19-20 June 2006.

The legislative proposal should therefore encourage the implementation of appropriate treatment levels of care for rare, chronic, congenital, life-threatening conditions, especially in Member States where access to treatment is restricted/not optimal to ensure better access to care for patients in need across the EU. The proposal should also encourage these latter Member States to follow the example of best practice from Member States with higher levels of treatment.

PPTA would welcome the opportunity to share its experience regarding cross-border care and engage into a constructive dialogue with the decision makers currently focusing on developing an EU approach to ensure legal certainty regarding cross-border health services with the aim to provide access to treatment for patients.

PPTA Background Information:

PPTA is the primary advocate for the world's leading producers of plasma-derived and recombinant analogue medicinal products. The medicines produced by PPTA members are used to treat patients suffering from rare life-threatening and/or life-impairing disorders and serious medical conditions including bleeding disorders (e.g. Haemophilia), immune system deficiencies (e.g. Primary Immunodeficiencies), auto-immune diseases, burns and shock.