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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

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WHO EUROPE REPORT: EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FACE SEVERE CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE HEALTH AND CARE WORKFORCE

Europe's health and care workforce is growing older, and the figures are especially staggering when it comes to doctors, the WHO/Europe report published on Wednesday (14 September) found. It has also indicated that 40% of medical practitioners are close to retirement age in one-third of European and Central Asian countries.

Countries of the WHO European Region warn that despite the ageing health and care workforce has been a serious problem before the COVID-19 pandemic, the severe burnout and demographic factors are making matters even worse. Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Europe regional director, pointed out that “adequately replacing them [...] will be a significant challenge for governments and health authorities shortly. Countries must move quickly and strategically to train, recruit, and retain the next generation of health professionals.

“Another key finding is the poor mental health of the healthcare workforce. According to the report, over 80% of nurses reported some sort of psychological distress caused by the pandemic in various countries. Furthermore, Hans Kluge underlined that health worker absences in the European region increased by 62% amid the first wave of the pandemic, and mental stability issues were reported in almost all countries.

To address the issues, WHO/Europe urged countries to follow a list of ten actions to strengthen the health and care workforce, including education, digitalisation and improving working conditions.

Source: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/362379>

STATE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION SPEECH (SOTEU): THE NEW EUROPEAN STRATEGY ON MENTAL HEALTH TO BE PRESENTED IN 2023

During her annual speech at the European Parliament's plenary session on Wednesday (14 September), Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced that the new EU initiative to tackle mental health issues will be presented in the following year. While no further details were provided, she noted that the new strategy is a response to the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE).

In the 9th proposal enlisted in the conclusion of CoFoE citizens appealed for a "a broader understanding of health", the first measure asks to "improve understanding of mental health issues and ways of addressing them." What is more, it concluded that „an EU Action Plan on mental health should be developed, that would provide long term Mental Health Strategy, including on research and also tackle the issue of availability of professionals, including for minors and the setting up in the near future of a dedicated European Year of Mental Health."

Regardless of the plan concerning a comprehensive approach to mental stability, Ursula von der Leyen's annual address was light on health policy. Barely any mention was referring to the Commission's workplan for the health agenda. It is a significant change compared to last year's speech, presented in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic and largely health-focused.

Source: <https://www.mhe-sme.org/soteu22-president-von-der-leyen-announces-a-long-awaited-initiative-on-mental-health/>

COVID-19: TEAM EUROPE DELIVERED €47.7 BILLION IN 2020-2021 TO HELP ITS PARTNERS TACKLE THE PANDEMIC

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, the EU, EU Member States and European financial institutions, as Team Europe, have disbursed €47.7 billion in support of partner countries in addressing the pandemic and its consequences, delivering on its promises with concrete results.

This figure significantly exceeds, by far, the initial €20 billion „Team Europe support package” pledged in April 2020, which has now increased to €53.7 billion due to the increased needs. The financial support comprises resources from the EU, its Member States, and financial institutions, particularly the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Up to now, Team Europe's COVID-19 response is supporting over 140 partner countries. From the overall €53.7 billion Team Europe package mobilised so far, €47.7 billion have been disbursed as of 31 December 2021:

- €3 billion for an emergency response to humanitarian needs
- €10.6 billion to strengthen health, water and sanitation systems
- €34.1 billion to mitigate the social and economic consequences of the pandemic, including job losses and education.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_5431

Thank you for your attention!

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