



## **Expert Panel on effective ways of investing in health**

### **Drafting group meeting on mental health of health workforce and other essential workers**

**(Virtual meeting)**

**16 April 2021**

#### Minutes

#### **1. Approval of the agenda and the minutes**

The agenda was approved without changes as well as the minutes of the previous meeting.

#### **2. Nature of the meeting**

The third drafting group meeting on *mental health of health workforce and other essential workers* took place on 16 April 2021 via MS Teams. The meeting, which was chaired by Professor Pedro Pita Barros, chair of the drafting group, was a non-public meeting.

No declarations of interest that could in any way interfere with the topic discussed were submitted from any member.

#### **3. Points discussed**

##### **Feedback/comments on the draft opinion**

The chair and rapporteurs gave a preview of the main elements added in the current draft and how specific sections of the opinion have been expanded. Rapporteurs reported on the key ideas discussed in the focus groups concerning delivery conditions for the possible innovative short and long term interventions/actions to improve mental health at individual, organisational and societal levels. They were presented under the following headings:

- Intervention characteristics: adaptability, internal source, evidence of strength and quality, cost, design and packaging
- Process: planning, executing, reflecting and evaluating, champions
- Characteristics of individuals involved: knowledge and beliefs about the intervention, self-efficacy, individual stages of change, individual identification with their organization/workplace, other personal attributes

- Inner Setting: organisational culture, organisational incentives and rewards, learning climate, leadership engagement, available resources, and access to knowledge and information
- Outer Setting: user needs and resources, cosmopolitanism, peer pressure, and external policy and incentives

Further discussion focused mainly on possible recommendations. Members agreed the recommendation should include practical steps to be taken to improve the situation for mental health support of health workers and essential workers as well as recommendations on strategies and/or concrete interventions, perhaps rooted in some identified best practices.

Recommendations should take into account the audience of the opinion, i.e. primary: EU policy makers, national policy makers, senior managers in sectors with high shares of essential workers as well as secondary: mental health practitioners, and occupational health practitioners. Importance of regional setting was also mentioned.

Members' suggestions for recommendations concerned among others the following matters:

- need of a uniform framework for data collection to assess the effectiveness of an intervention short-term and longer-term outcomes
- interventions supporting prevention and early approach to mental health issues should be considered as investment not cost
- define perspective when assessing cost effectiveness - many interventions that may not be cost effective for the organisation may be for society
- to enhance happiness more comprehensive interventions with the involvement of primary care and community stakeholders are needed, explore joint actions and strengthen community coalitions and supportive synergies
- importance of accessible support on organisational level
- create at EU-level a 'learning community' for exchange of 'best practices' on increasing mental health resilience of healthcare workers and other essential workers
- EU could contribute to create a society that is more "mental health sensitive" (and sensitive for the determinants of mental health).

Members further discussed how to link the recommendations to specific instruments, existing legislation/regulation and how to prioritise them. It was suggested to categorise the recommendations according to the audience they are targeted to.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Members agreed to further review the EU Best Practice Portal interventions and CHRODIS+ recommendations and provide outstanding contributions by 23 April in order to present and discuss the draft opinion in the plenary meeting of 28 April.

The Chair thanked everyone for active participation and valuable discussion to move forward with the opinion.

#### **5. Next meeting**

The next meeting of the drafting group is scheduled for 11 May 2021 via MS Teams.

#### **6. List of participants**

**EXPH Members**

DE MAESENEER Jan

GARCIA-ALTES Anna  
KRINGOS Dionne  
LIONIS Christos  
MCKEE Martin  
MURAUŠKIENE Liubove  
PITA BARROS Pedro  
ROGERS Heather-Lynn  
SICILIANI Luigi  
WIECZOROWSKA-TOBIS Katarzyna  
ZACHAROV Sergej  
ZALETEL Jelka

**Researchers**

KIRKBY Victoria  
MARQUES Diogo  
MATEUS Ceu  
PETELOS Elena

**COM**

BIGDELI Leyla (EMPL)  
CARVALHO Artur (SANTE)  
DAJKA Bela (SANTE)  
VOLOSINOVA Viera (SANTE)