

Flash Report

EU Non-Communicable Diseases Initiative

Stakeholders meeting - webinar

28 November 2022

DG SANTE hosted a webinar with the public health stakeholder community, chaired by the Acting Deputy Director-General for Health with more than 120 participants. The objectives of the webinar were two. First to provide an update on the implementation of the first three strands of the EU NCD Initiative including **cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and health determinants**, and secondly, to discuss priority areas and actions in the remaining two strands of **mental health** and **neurological disorders** as well.

Update on the "Healthier Together" EU NCD Initiative

DG SANTE presented an update on the Healthier Together Initiative which seeks to support Member States in implementing concrete actions in key disease areas with the overall goal to reduce health inequalities. The Guidance document has been designed as a practical toolkit with two pillars: first, the identification of ambitious actions and best practices in prevention and promotion to inspire and help Member States prioritise their own interventions, and second the identification of the EU legal and financial instruments that are available to support the Member States.

DG SANTE also presented highlights of the EU4Health 2023 Work Programme which was adopted in November with a budget of €735.8 million.¹ For stakeholders, the 2023 Work Programme includes a number of calls for proposals on mental health, dementia and other neurological disorders, and on chronic respiratory diseases as well as action grants on mental health challenges for cancer patients and survivors.

Discussion

During the webinar, stakeholders were invited to share their views on priorities for action, best practices and innovative approaches, with a particular focus on mental health issues, neurological disorders and chronic respiratory disorders.

Feedback from stakeholders included positive encouragement for the priorities already highlighted in the Guidance document which highlights the concerns and views of Member States and stakeholders. Stakeholders welcomed the ongoing emphasis on a holistic and integrated approach across the target strands. They highlighted the need to continue to seek synergies within and between strands such as mental health and neurological diseases and the importance of collaboration with the World Health Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in areas of mutual interest. Improving quality of life for patients with neurological conditions was also highlighted and support for multidisciplinary education and interdisciplinary training in the field of palliative care to be extended as the benefits extend beyond end-of-life care. The role of nutrition in the context of mental health and overall well-being needs greater exposure. Finally, the importance of education and training for healthcare personnel was stressed as they are key to implementing effective referral pathways for disease

¹ https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/2023-eu4health-work-programme_en

prevention and treatment. In response to remarks on funding opportunities, DG SANTE clarified that all NGOs should have the same opportunities for applying for funding and the EU Health Policy Platform provides opportunities to all organisations to engage and connect with each other.

Next Steps

The Chair thanked all participants for their valuable input and said that a further meeting would be held in the spring of 2023 to discuss the implementation of the Healthier Together.

He then informed that the current Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases will shortly be replaced by a new Commission expert group on Public Health, with a broader mandate to address all public health challenges, not just non-communicable diseases. In particular, HIV/AIDS, TB and hepatitis, vaccination strategies, and antimicrobial resistance policies will be addressed more effectively through the collection and potential support to implementation of best practices.

In respect of the Commission initiative on mental health, a separate Communication will be issued in due course.