

A unique publication is mapping the current state of the Czech healthcare system and reveals potential threats for the future

(June 23, 2008) A comprehensive assessment of the current state of the Czech healthcare system is given in the new publication "The Status, Development and Perspective of the Healthcare System in the Czech Republic", that has been written by the participants of the project entitled The Roundtable on the Future Path of Financing Healthcare in the Czech Republic. This report is a result of almost one-year-long work of independent analysts and experts of political parties. It contains over 300 pages and 270 diagrams, charts and maps of statistical analyses and data. An integral part of the report is also a collection of opinions from more than 150 personalities and organizations involved in healthcare in the Czech Republic.

"Although there have been many analytical studies, this publication is to a large extent a unique one. The goal of the report is not only to provide a comprehensive description, but also to collect observations, comments and opinions of experts on the state of healthcare in the Czech Republic," says Ondrej Matl, the project coordinator and co-author of the publication. And he adds: "The report is no final product of the project. It presents mainly the basis for forthcoming proposals of the political parties on solutions to the problems detected."

The report provides an assessment of the current state of the health system in the Czech Republic and points at current and long-term problems which the system will have to tackle in the future. The report contains analytical chapters devoted to health of the population and its changes, the structure of consumption of healthcare services, the outcomes of healthcare services and, last but not least, it also contains an analysis of the financing and financial flows in the health sector (using the System of Health Accounts methodology). "In the current political situation, this report is something unique because the experts from several political parties have agreed on it. It is neither a statistical bulletin, nor a scientific study, nor a political manifesto," says Tom Philipp (Christian Democrats), a member of the expert team nominated by one of the political parties and Deputy Director for healthcare services in the Thomayer Hospital in Prague.

The report describes the impact of an ageing population and challenges as concerns ensuring provision of long-term care. The report also notes that, despite considerable technological advances, we currently do not know and cannot adequately measure the value of money invested in healthcare. Also, increasing regional disparities can be seen in the use and quality of healthcare services; also resources invested in healthcare differ significantly between regions. Another problem is lack of personal motivation of Czech citizens to care about their own health. "People expect that while paying health insurance, all their health problems will be solved by someone else and ideally for free. This can be seen in the relatively low spending on health in the budgets of individual households, great aversion to pay for healthcare services and relatively high willingness to spend on alcohol, tobacco and other health impairing items," explains MUDr. Stanislav Vachek, the project analyst.

"The report documents that the Czech healthcare provides the same level of services as it is common in other European countries for considerably less money. The future development of the healthcare funding cannot rely only on health insurance revenues. There is a significantly higher support from the regional and local budgets in other countries. It often consists of more than 50% of income of the medical facilities. Another serious problem is the financing of undergraduate and postgraduate training of healthcare workers. I believe that owing to this report a debate on the development of the healthcare system in the Czech Republic will be opened across all political parties and professional interests," says Prof. Leos Navratil (Communists), another member of the expert team of the Roundtable project.

The report is accessible on the web page – www.kulatystul.cz (in the Czech language only).