



Commissioner for Health and Food Safety  
Directorate General for Health and Food Safety  
B - 1049 Brussels  
Belgium

Dear Commissioner Andriukaitis,

Cc: Commissioner Thyssen

There are many challenges facing health and social care systems across Europe and impacting people's access to affordable, high quality, safe health and social care. While we recognise the important efforts that you and your teams have taken to tackle these challenges, we also believe that the European Commission has the mandate and competence to provide additional leadership and ensure that issues such as health and social care system reform, particularly the shift away from acute care to the community, are addressed by Member States. **In particular, we call upon you and your fellow Commissioners, to develop a dedicated and holistic policy on community care.** This would require a paradigm-shift from disease-oriented towards goal-oriented care, taking the goals of the person in terms of quantity and quality of life as the starting point for the intervention.

Community care, or care outside of acute settings, has the potential to support smarter spending, generate greater investment in the local communities, where people usually want to receive care, and reduce inequalities for citizens who want and need to access care and technologies outside of the hospital. These priorities, outlined within the European Commission's own health strategy, are essential for achieving healthier life years and health and social welfare systems' sustainability.

We understand that the Commission is looking at primary care as a health care solution to the challenges raised up by the health systems performance (HSPA) review, and we believe this should flow naturally from your work. A unique community care policy would cross-cut other Commission activities (such as HSPA, mHealth green paper, e-Health Action plan, workforce planning and work of the expert panel on investing in health, the EC's disability agenda, the EC Recommendation on investing in children, the EIP AHA). We believe this is especially important because no holistic policy exists to bring these key aspects together to support Member States in their reform efforts. The EU can and should add value to Member States, and Member States agree. In particular, under the Latvian Presidency of the EU, the Latvians launched a [Declaration](#) entitled "*Making Patient-Centred Community Care a Reality*" in which they encouraged the EU institutions to:

- Increase preventive care in the community
- Facilitate access to innovation for people in the community
- Support training of healthcare professionals in the community
- Promote integrated care across all points of care
- Strengthen the governance of integrated care



We acknowledge that your mandate as Commissioners includes ensuring that any work reflect the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality as well as take a coordinated approach to policy. As such, we believe that focusing your efforts on community care links to the ongoing work of the DG ECFIN (European Semester), DG Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020), DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (workforce planning, job creation and retention, disability, investing in children and long – term care). In order to make person-centred community care a reality, we recommend that together you:

1. Develop a Commission Communication on Community Care
2. Ensure best practices in community care are reflected as part of the work on health systems performance assessment
3. Establish funding in the 2016 health and social affairs programmes dedicated to projects in community care
4. Consider a future joint action which addresses the diversity of issues encompassed in community care including policy, system design, innovation & value, access & reimbursement, workforce planning and quality care and standards.

We believe the European Commission is uniquely placed to lead on the issue of community care and generate the supporting activities necessary to help Member States make smart choices and smart investment in community care – which benefits us all as European citizens.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Kindest regards,

John Bowis  
Honorary President, Health First Europe

Stecy Yghemonos  
Executive Director, Eurocarers

Prof Jan De Maeseneer  
Chairman, Europe Forum for Primary Care

John Halloran  
Chief Executive, European Social Network