

Healthcare

Overview

The short and long term development of the healthcare sector in Bulgaria is strongly determined by healthcare reform, a fundamental reform aiming at efficient allocation and expenditure of healthcare assigned funds, improvement of primary and ambulatory care, reform of the existing hospital system, introduction of eHealth and mHealth tools, improvement of the National Health Insurance Fund operational efficiency and strengthening the institutional capacity of all healthcare related institutions.

The health sector reform has several components, the first one being reform and sustainability of the primary and ambulatory care sector. It provides practice equipment for primary health care, funds physicians' office information systems, provides training in general practitioner (GP) practice management, funds an information campaign, finances a health reform investment program to provide low-interest loans to physicians, and funds a labor adjustment strategy.

The second component targets reform of the hospital system, including: funding hospital information systems, financing a health reform investment program, reduction in the number of hospitals, optimizing their functionality and funding a labor adjustment strategy.

The third component aims at assisting the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) to establish the technological infrastructure to operate the insurance system, including the hardware and software systems needed as well as the training and technical assistance required.

The fourth component aims to strengthen the management and institutional capacity of the Health Ministry, the NHIF, and the health system in general.

Bulgaria's healthcare budget for 2009 and 2010 amounted to 1.573 billion EUR and 1.329 billion EUR respectively. The healthcare budget for 2011 amounted to 1.659 billion EUR (4.2% of GDP) and for 2012 is estimated at approximately 3 billion BGN (ROE 1 EUR= 1.96 BGN) equals 1.875 billion EUR. Recent information about the budget for the year of 2013 indicates that the budget will be 1.607 billion EUR*.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

Sub-sector best prospects in healthcare include, but are not limited to hospital equipment, homecare equipment, emergency equipment, telemedicine and eHealth systems, mobile veterinary equipment and real-time PCR veterinary tests for pandemic diseases.

Opportunities

The healthcare reform in Bulgaria is driving demand in the following areas:

- invasive and noninvasive surgery equipment, ultrasound equipment, in-vitro diagnostic equipment, urology equipment, laboratory and testing equipment, diagnostic imaging equipment, equipment for kidney treatment, tissue and blood bank related equipment, veterinary turnkey project equipment, hospital care equipment, information systems, modern patient monitoring systems, hospital management systems, new high tech products such as laser instruments, magnetic resonance picture imaging apparatus and computerized systems for cosmetic, aesthetic and restorative medicine including such for dentistry.
- X-ray systems, dental mechanical tools and instruments, dental surgery services, surgical tools, chairs, ultrasound equipment, photopolymer equipment, physiotherapy equipment, abrasive tools, maxillary surgery, anesthetics, sterilizing equipment, fittings, appliances, metal workplaces, ceramic work places and plastic workplaces
- Telemedicine and introduction of healthcare portal to be based on unified healthcare database files for every Bulgarian citizen fully compatible with EU standards.

Another aspect of healthcare reform is related to the measures, which have to be introduced by the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture and Food concerning sanitation and eradication of

pandemic diseases. As the entry point to the EU veterinary markets, Bulgaria is mandated to carefully and strictly undertake sanitation and eradication measures of any possible veterinary pandemic diseases such as Classic Swine Fever, Foot-and-Mouth disease, Bird Flu.

Web Resources

Ministry of Healthcare - www.mh.government.bg

National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) – www.nhif.bg

Bulgarian Drug Agency – www.bda.bg

Veterinary Institute with Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry – www.mzh.government.bg