



European Forum of Medical Associations and WHO

Oslo, Norway, 11-12 March 2005

ENGLISH ONLY

Statement on healthcare in prisons and other forms of detention

The European Forum of Medical Associations and WHO meeting in Oslo on 11-12 March 2005,

Notes that healthcare in prisons, detention centres and police institutions raises specific ethical and health issues;

Welcomes the activities and initiatives of national medical associations to provide support and education (such as the Norwegian Medical Association/WMA internet course) for doctors working in custodial care;

URGES national medical associations to address these issues, working to the following broad principles:

- Detained persons should receive a standard of medical care equal to that available within the general community.
- Healthcare in prisons should be structured to reflect the high level of mental health and substance abuse problems within the detained population, as well as its social, economic and educational makeup.
- While recognizing that physicians working in prisons have dual loyalty, the healthcare and confidentiality of the patient should always be the doctor's primary concern.
- Healthcare policies should recognize the financial benefit of effectively treating health problems which, if left untreated, will result in significant overall additional cost to the community.
- Patients in prison should have the necessary access to secondary care services.
- Investment in after-care and support following release is essential.