

## ***Patient Forum in Moldova***

### ***Patient involvement can improve the quality of health services***

The first ever Patient Forum in Moldova took place on September 28 in Chisinau, Moldova. The Patient Forum was organized within the project "Towards health equity through social accountability", implemented by the Swiss Red Cross in partnership with the local NGOs "CASMED" and "HOMECARE", as part of the „Progressing towards Universal Health Coverage in Moldova” support program carried out in jointly with the World Bank, with the financial support of the Swiss Government.

Patients can make a significant contribution to monitoring and improving the quality of health services by reporting their experience, expressing their views on the care they have received and identifying potential deficiencies. Their involvement is pivotal in the improvement of the quality of healthcare and contributes to the development of an equitable healthcare system. The concept of social responsibility and accountability, the role and importance of patient participation in health decision-making processes, but also national and international practices in the field were the main topics of discussion at the Patient Forum.

The Forum was attended by over 100 people including representatives of patient associations and groups, government officials, representatives of NGOs and national health authorities, as well as national and international experts.

During the event, international experiences of integrating patient communities in the decision-making processes, together with functional patient mobilization models used in Great Britain, Belgium, Romania, and the Czech Republic were shared and discussed.

The Patient Forum was a valuable opportunity for patients, medical professionals and authorities to discuss and debate the barriers and opportunities of patient participation. In conclusion, the event highlighted the importance of patient involvement and participation in healthcare decision-making as the patients are experts in their own right. Their personal experiences and insights are invaluable in the development of health policies and in monitoring the quality of health services.

The Forum ended with a pledge to the Government, health authorities and medical associations in Moldova to promote and actively support patient involvement in the decision-making processes, including periodic consultations of patient's voices, feed-back sessions and integration of patients in hospital boards and medical organizations.