

Health co-operativism, a basic element in the public systems

The health co-operativism is a indispensable element in the viability of the health public systems. That was one of the conclusions of the International Seminar on Healthcare and Cooperatives celebrated in Barcelona last April 20 to 21, organized by the Espriu Foundation with the sponsorship of the Groups Assistència and ASISA and collaboration from IHCO and ICA.

The meeting was attended by more than 200 co-operative leaders, delegates of institutions and experts in this field, that during two days analyzed the evolution of the health co-operatives in the world and also the present situation of the health public systems in the different countries, showing the increasing importance of the collaboration between the both public and private models for the purpose of guaranteeing an attention of quality to the citizens.

In this same sense, the director of knowledge management of ICA, **Ms Gabriella Sozánski**, emphasized “the enormous possibilities of collaboration between administrations and co-operatives opened by the present social and economic moment”, whereas president of the International Health Co-operatives Organization (IHCO), **Dr Jose Carlos Guisado**, remembered the necessity of “not forgetting that the common objective is to give the best service to the citizens, authentic final beneficiaries of the health system”.

Throughout the International Seminar, celebrated in the Hilton Hotel of Barcelona, more than 30 speakers put in common diverse co-operative experiences in different countries like Canada, Japan, Brazil, United Kingdom, Malaysia, Sweden or Spain. At the same time, two recognized experts of international level as **Dr Reinhard Busse** (research director of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies) and **Dr Guillem López Casanovas** (director of the Economics and Health Research Center of the University Pompeu Fabra of Barcelona) emphasized the convergence of problems that suffer the diverse public systems anywhere in the world, some of which they are almost in crisis.

Some of the political representatives present did not doubt in recognizing the complementary role that health cooperatives have in the support of public systems. The Seminary also paid a deserved tribute to **Dr Josep Espriu**, died in 2002, of whom it was showed his creativity and dynamism to start up an original co-operative model based on the conjunction of efforts between professionals and users of the health.