

Health campaigners reflect on 2004 and plan for 2005

Between December 2004 and January 2005, HSCNews International surveyed health advocacy organisations across the world about their 2004 activities and their plans for 2005. The survey's 276 replies indicate that healthcare provision and the state of people's health is far worse than official statistics suggest in just about every country. The survey generated the following findings:

- ☞ *Inappropriate care, levels of public ignorance, and misdiagnoses by doctors is shockingly high. Nearly 75% of the 276 respondent campaigners said that they were involved in disease-awareness campaigns to rectify the situation.*
- ☞ *Government cutbacks are affecting the quality of medical research. Half of all the participants said that they spent much of 2004 raising funds to support research into treatments for neurological diseases.*
- ☞ *Patients (in particular, those with cancer or neurological diseases) are deprived of good-quality information about the existence of new diagnostic tests and treatments.*
- ☞ *Over half of the 41 mental health groups participating in the survey believed that patients' rights are being abused, and 60% of the participants said that patients' freedoms have been overly curtailed.*
- ☞ *Mental health groups commented that people with mental health problems still feel stigmatised.*
- ☞ *Patients and the public want more control over their own medical affairs.*
- ☞ *The health advocacy movement is showing explosive growth.*
- ☞ *Disability, patient and statutory organisations are plugging many of the gaps in health services left open by payers and governments. If the process continues, the public could well find itself more dependent on charities for healthcare provision than at any time since the Victorian era.*

***HSCNews surveys 276
campaigning groups
during December
2004 and January
2005***

About the survey

Between December 2004 and January 2005, HSCNews International conducted an email survey of 276 senior executives from consumer, disability and patient organisations. The respondents were drawn from across the globe and from disparate speciality areas [see Appendix in accompanying publication]. Participants explained their health campaigns and management challenges in 2004, and those that they anticipated in 2005. Respondent campaigners supplied copious comments to illustrate and back up their viewpoints. Our thanks go to all the survey respondents for their time, and for their insights.

The background

Throughout the world, governments and the payers of healthcare are struggling to control a rapid rise in