



## GIVING THE GRASSROOTS THEIR SAY

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO), THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND MANY NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE ALL EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN MOVING TOWARDS SYSTEMS THAT EMPHASISE PATIENT PRIORITIES. HOWEVER, NONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL, SYSTEMATIC PROCESS OF PATIENT AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION— IN OTHER WORDS, A MECHANISM FOR GIVING THE GRASSROOTS THEIR SAY.

PAGES **6-26** EXAMINE THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TAKEN IN BRAZIL, THE EU, THE UK, NETHERLANDS, AND THE US, WHICH INCLUDE:

- ⇒ STRAIGHTFORWARD ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING.
- ⇒ GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PROCESSES.
- ⇒ STIMULATING MARKET-DRIVEN CONSUMER-LED HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS.
- ⇒ INVOLVEMENT BY DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

THE ARTICLE DISCUSSES THE PROS AND CONS OF EACH APPROACH.

INTERVIEWS [PAGES **27-55**] WERE CONDUCTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- ⇒ ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH REFORM [USA]
- ⇒ JOHN BARON, MP [UK]
- ⇒ DG HEALTH AND CONSUMER PROTECTION [EU]
- ⇒ EUROPEAN PATIENTS' FORUM [EUROPE]
- ⇒ GRUPO DE APOIO À PREVENÇÃO À AIDS [BRAZIL]
- ⇒ MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE [EUROPE]
- ⇒ NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE [UK]
- ⇒ NEDERLANDSE PATIËNTENCONSUMENTEN FEDERATIE [NETHERLANDS]

PAGES **56-57** CARRIES A LETTER FROM BRIAN BUCKLEY, HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCHER AND CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF LONDON-BASED /MCONTACT. HE WRITES TO *HSCNEWS* TO DRAW ATTENTION TO A FORTHCOMING PARTNERSHIP OF PATIENTS, CARERS AND CLINICIANS AIMED AT INFLUENCING RESEARCH INTO ONE PARTICULAR MEDICAL CONDITION, URINARY INCONTINENCE.