

The Health System in Greece

Chapter

8

8.1 Introduction to the National Health System

Issues of health and general well being are of a great importance for everyone. Therefore, in order for the researchers to be aware with the national health insurance, the

medical treatment options and other relevant topics, general aspects of the Greek Health System are described. The Greek Health Care System can be characterised as a mixed system: the health care branches of the various social insurance funds co-exist with the National Health System (ESY- Ethniko Systema Ygeias).

ESY established in 1983 guarantees free health care for all residents of Greece. The system covers the entire Greek population, without any special entitlement condition, regardless of professional category or region. Health care services are also provided to EU and non-EU citizens on the basis of multilateral or bilateral agreements.

Furthermore, within the ESY context, primary health care services are provided through rural health centres and provincial surgeries in rural areas, the outpatient departments of regional and district hospitals, the polyclinics of the social insurance institutions and specialist in urban areas. Secondary care is provided by public hospitals, private for-profit hospitals and clinics or hospitals owned by social insurance funds. In general, if a foreigner is working in Greece and pays social security contributions, he/she is being allowed to receive a medical card and get medical treatment and free hospitalisation. Researchers from EU are advised to contact the Health Service Organisation in their country to get the necessary series E documents, namely E111, which offers the access to free treatment in a public hospital.

8.2 Medical Treatment Options

8.2.1 Emergencies

Always keep in mind that whenever you need emergency treatment, it can be obtained through the emergency departments at major hospitals (see hospitals and clinics). Ambulances (EKAV) provide immediate medical attention and emergency transport to hospitals, free of charge to people who have registered with the ESY (Emergency Tel: 166).

8.2.2 Medication

Medicines are available from the chemist shops (pharmacies) divided in two main categories depending on whether or not a prescription is required.

In case you need a medicine available only with a prescription, public or private doctors will consider your situation and provide you with the prescription in order to be allowed to buy the appropriate medicine from the pharmacy.

Additionally, you should be aware that if you have a health care card given by the appropriate National Insurance Fund, you will pay a reduced price for prescription medication.

Further information:

National Organization for Medicines

URL: www.eof.gr

Email: relation@eof.gr

Tel: +30 210 6507200

Fax: +30 210 6545535

8.2.3 Hospitals and Clinics

- Public Hospitals and Clinics

Public hospitals and clinics differ in terms of size and specialisation and, in general, are very well equipped, especially in the major cities. Located throughout Greece, provide a free of charge wide range of high quality medical care for patients. These can include services such as emergency care, surgery, cardiology, radiology, etc. Smaller public hospitals, usually established in smaller cities or villages, may not offer all medical services. However, if the treatment you need is not available you will be referred to another hospital. Ministry of Health and social solidarity provides a list with the Greek hospitals.

URL: www.mohaw.gr/gr/ygeia/links/hospitals 

URL: www.xo.gr/results.jsp 

- Private Hospitals and Clinics

Private hospitals and clinics are usually located in big villages and cities. These hospitals usually provide a number of in-hospital services for patients, similar to those offered by public. In case you need medical treatment and choose to go into a private clinic, it is advisable to join a private health insurance fund to help with your costs, as ESY tends not to cover the cost of your private hospital accommodation.

URL: www.mohaw.gr/gr/ygeia/links/hospitals 

URL: www.xo.gr/results.jsp 

8.2.4 Doctors

If you need a doctor and it is not an emergency, you can go to a family doctor. You may choose your own doctor -specialisation- from a list provided when you registered with ESY. List with doctors throughout Greece provided by the Greek Yellow Pages

URL: www.xo.gr/results.jsp

8.2.5 Dentists

You should register with ESI in order to pay reduced price for public dentist services. However, there are private dentists who will charge a fee for their service. List with dentists throughout Greece provided by the Greek Yellow Pages

URL: www.xo.gr/results.jsp

8.3 Health Insurance

- Public Insurance

Health insurance in Greece is offered through hospitals, private clinics and doctors as long as you have been registered with a social insurance fund. Registration with such institutions requires part or full time employment.

- Private Insurance

There are an important number of citizens which have subscribed to a private insurance organisation, in order to enjoy private medical insurance. However, the costs and types of cover vary widely so whether you decide to get private health insurance, it is important to check the details carefully before you take out the policy. List with insurance companies throughout Greece provided by the Greek Yellow Pages

URL: www.xo.gr/results.jsp

8.4 People with Special Needs – Disabilities

The following website includes useful information for people with special needs

URL: www.kep.gov.gr/multilang/categories.asp?DccID=000000000000028.EN