

EQUINET WEBINAR SERIES on Equality, Diversity, and Non-Discrimination in Healthcare: Tackling systemic inequalities for a more egalitarian access to healthcare services

22-24-28-30 June 2021, series of 2.5-hour webinars, Online (Zoom)

Concept note

A [recent Eurobarometer survey](#) showed that healthcare was by far the most important issue for the future of Europe according to Europeans. However, equality in the field of healthcare, despite its centrality to wellbeing, remains a relatively under-examined field in the work of equality bodies compared to fields such as employment or education. This is reflected by the lack of EU wide legislation that would cover the field of healthcare in national anti-discrimination legislation across all grounds, which indirectly affects the mandates of equality bodies throughout Europe. Due to these limitations, the mandates and powers of equality bodies among European countries greatly varies.

The findings of the forthcoming Equinet perspective 'Equality, Diversity, and Non-Discrimination in Healthcare' prepared by Niall Crowley, points to obstacles faced by equality bodies in the field of healthcare. These barriers are for instance linked to the design of national healthcare systems, which often face an overall lack of resources and an uneven geographical spread of services, directly affecting access for the most marginalised groups. Other obstacles identified in Equinet's perspective include the inherent complexity of healthcare systems requiring particular expertise from equality bodies and the power imbalances between patient and provider. The perspective points to the lack of attention to equality within healthcare systems in pointing to the lack of organisational equality infrastructures, capacity, and policies in healthcare provider organisations.

Moreover, it is undeniable, as shown by the results of the Eurobarometer survey mentioned above, that the COVID 19 pandemic has stressed the pre-existing structural and systemic inequalities in this field and has brought to the fore the relevance of egalitarian access to healthcare services. This has prompted for healthcare services to become a priority issue in both national and international agendas.

This webinar series aims, on the basis of the findings of Equinet's perspective at building an event in which key healthcare actors, together with equality bodies, can share their concerns and find ways to collaborate and overcome identified obstacles to securing equality competent healthcare service provision. Whilst the impact of COVID 19 will be examined specifically in one of the three-day sessions planned, focus will be put on stressing the pre-existing systemic inequalities in the design and delivery of such services.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of these webinars is to build the capacities of equality bodies on discrimination & inequalities in access to health services, to better protect victims of discrimination in this field and to promote egalitarian access to healthcare services.



This will be done, on the one hand, by better understanding and constructing synergies with actors involved in the process of securing non-discriminatory and egalitarian access to healthcare services, especially health professionals and national health authorities. On the other hand, the seminar aims at constructing a space in which vulnerable groups can share their experience and expertise regarding in access and provision of healthcare services.

PARTICIPANTS

The series of webinars are designed to bring together, national equality body experts working in the field of healthcare services or wanting to develop their skills in the field of healthcare services, with other actors working on the area of healthcare services with a concern for non-discrimination and equality (for instance international organisations, national health authorities, public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals, and disease groups; public health associations and institutes in Europe; national and regional institutes, academic and research centres, national and regional authorities and government departments etc.) and umbrella organisations of right holders suffering from systemic discrimination in their access to healthcare services, in order to construct synergies and better understand the needs and priorities in the area.

SESSIONS

22/06 State of Play: Equality and non-discrimination in the access to healthcare

24/06 COVID-19: The Pandemic that changed it all?

28/06 Healthcare systems and systemic equality

30/06 Working together towards an egalitarian healthcare service provision

For any information relating to this event, please contact Jone Elizondo-Urrestarazu, Legal and Policy Officer (jone.elizondo@equineteurope.org).

