



ФОНД ЗА ЗДРАВСТВЕНО  
ОСИГУРУВАЊЕ НА МАКЕДОНИЈА  
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## PRESS CONFERENCE

### Annex to the current agreements on relaxing the punitive provisions for pharmacies



Upon completing the negotiations with the Medical and Dental Chambers, which resulted in the preparation of new annexes to the agreements that offer incentives to physicians and dentists, the Fund, together with the Pharmaceutical Chamber, reviewed the options for relaxing the punitive policy for pharmacies.

We would like to announce that as a result of the negotiations with the Pharmaceutical Chamber, new annexes to the 2016 agreements for pharmacies have been drafted. The Fund adopted these amendments in order to facilitate the daily operations of pharmacists and pharmacies, as well as relaxing the punitive policy and reducing contractual penalties, pursuant to the Governmental policy.

The Fund believes that by improving the current contractual provisions, greater pharmaceutical care for the insureds will be ensured, having a generally more relaxed relations between the pharmacists and the Fund, and reduced liabilities that are an unnecessary burden to the pharmacists. The new annexes to the agreements allow better time planning for the pharmacists, relieving them from the additional daily administrative tasks after working hours. At the same time, these amendments are aimed at promoting electronic operations. The amendments to the agreements follow the trend of getting better quality pharmaceutical service and better care for the patients.

In summary, the new annexes to the agreements provide for a reduction of eight contractual penalties at  $\frac{1}{2}$  monthly fee to reprimands, but only for the first offense noted. If the same offense is repeated then there is a penalty of  $\frac{1}{2}$  fee; 5 contractual penalties are deleted. For two agreement terminations, as envisaged so far, the new annex only provides for a fine, and two contractual penalties of 1 monthly fee are reduced to  $\frac{1}{2}$  monthly fee.

Having more and more changes in the healthcare system, and the introduction of new electronic tools and electronic connectivity between the pharmacies and the Fund, we have ascertained that some of the obligations have been an





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unnecessary burden to the pharmaceutical teams in pharmacies, and therefore we have relaxed these contractual penalties, which are mostly of an administrative nature. Just as an example, the penalties that are deleted refer to everyday data saving – which is now done automatically, procurement of computer equipment and internet – now the pharmacy can operate without a computer and internet (except in specific cases), meaning that provisions, which were applicable in the past and are currently only burdening the operations of the pharmacies and are everyday routine, have been deleted.

Also, as a protective mechanism for the insureds, we have introduced two new obligations as follows:

- ✓ The pharmacy must issue a medicine to the insured if said medicine is on the shelf as per the quota;
- ✓ POS receipts showing the full amount of the medicine, co-payment amount, and the surcharge, if any, will be issued as of 1.4.2016.

As per this provision, anyone will be able to see on the spot if the co-payment has been properly charged, and any possibility of manipulation is thus excluded, since the co-payment scale for prescription medicines is clearly visible in all pharmacies.

This annex to the 2016 agreements was accepted by the Pharmaceutical Chamber of Macedonia, which also expressed satisfaction with the novelties and burden relief, and also recognized this annex as good



faith action by the Fund to meet the needs of pharmacists and pharmacies.

The annexes to the agreements will be signed by the Fund and the healthcare institutions by electronic means, using a digital signature, which is a relief for the healthcare institutions by saving them time, money and human resources since now they are doing this from their offices.

In more details, the burden relief concerns the following segments:

Five contractual penalties have been deleted:

- The first referred to a healthcare institution that has failed to maintain complete records or has failed to protect the electronic data;
- The second referred to operations contrary to the agreement for which no penalty has been prescribed. We deem that after 18 years of having agreements with healthcare institutions, no pharmacy should be fined for something we have not envisaged.
- The third referred to a healthcare institution that has failed to perform computer processing of the prescriptions for medicines issued, which are borne by the Fund, by the end of the day for the same day;



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- The fourth referred to a healthcare institution that has failed to provide or is not using the barcode reader; and
- The fifth referred to a healthcare institution, which in the agreed upon term has failed to procure or modify the computer equipment and the Internet connection.

We have reduced eight contractual penalties from ½ fee to a reprimand in the new annex to the agreements (only for the first offense, if repeated the penalty remains):

- ✓ If the healthcare institution fails to submit the required data to the Fund under this agreement within the prescribed deadline;
  - ✓ If it fails to orderly keep the financial and material accounting in accordance with the regulations;
  - ✓ If it fails to make an entry for the medicine issued in the healthcare card of the insured;
  - ✓ If the list of medicines without surcharge is not printed in a minimum A3 size, downloaded from the website of the Fund, placed in a prominent place and visible to the insureds;
  - ✓ If the healthcare institution has not requisitioned the medicines without surcharge as provided in the GLBD form, or there is no evidence on the reasons as to why the medicine has not been delivered the manufacturer or the distributor;
  - ✓ If the healthcare institution has failed to inform the Fund of any changes (statute, head office, etc.) within 20 days;
  - ✓ If the healthcare institution has failed to inform the Fund in writing of the changes in the pharmaceutical team;
  - ✓ If the healthcare institution has failed to provide medicines without surcharge of all medicines requisitioned as per the needs of the insureds.
- We have reduced two unilateral agreement terminations that are now contractual penalty of three monthly fees if the healthcare institution fails to allow inspection by the Fund, and if the healthcare institution, after signing the agreement, changes the insurance to less than full time employment hours for part of the pharmaceutical team.
  - The have relaxed two contractual penalties, reducing them from one monthly fee to a half monthly fee, in case the healthcare institution fails to issue medicines to insureds-foreigners, and in case when it charges the co-payment contrary to the applicable regulations and fails to record it in the computer application, and fails to issue POS receipt for the collected co-payment, as well as POS receipt for medicine issued with surcharge.

At the same time, as a mechanism for protection of the insureds, the Fund has introduced two new obligations for pharmacies, as follows:



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- ✓ The pharmacy must issue a medicine to the insured if said medicine is on the shelf as per the quota;
- ✓ POS receipts showing the full amount of the medicine, co-payment amount, and the surcharge, if any, will be issued as of 1.4.2016.

As per this provision, anyone will be able to see on the spot if the co-payment has been properly charged, and any possibility of manipulation is thus excluded, since the co-payment scale for prescription medicines is clearly visible in all pharmacies.

Prof. Dr. Bistra Angelovska, President of the Pharmaceutical Chamber, has expressed her satisfaction on the cooperation with the Fund in all operational segments, and has expressed her gratitude on the attentiveness of the management team and the relaxation of the punitive policy, which means better quality working conditions, satisfied pharmacists and insureds, who are getting adequate and quality pharmaceutical healthcare. The cooperation between the Fund and the Pharmaceutical Chamber will continue and addressing all issues affecting the pharmacists in Macedonia.

As a reminder, the HIFM enters into agreements with pharmacies for issuing prescription medicines. Currently, HIFM has signed agreements with a total of 772 to pharmacies, of which: 68 are pharmaceutical stations, 6 are mobile pharmacies, and 3 are rural pharmacies. The 2015 budget of the Fund for prescription medicines was 2.465.000.000 denars. According to the Fund's data on prescription medicines, 17.424.010 prescriptions have been dispensed in 10 months.