Sagesa Spanish Healthcare Recruitment
ES +34 951 560 841
UK +44 203 744 3344
info@sagesahealthcare.com
www.sagesahealthcare.com

The Future of the Health Services in Ireland

Universal Health Insurance (UHI)

In November 2012, the Irish Government approved Future Health: A Strategic Framework for Reform of the Health Service which set out the main healthcare reforms that would be introduced in the following years, as key building blocks for the introduction of Universal Health Insurance in 2016. (http://health.gov.ie/).

Universal Health Insurance (UHI) aims to eliminate the current two-tier system of public and private medicine and to end the practice of queue-jumping for treatment by people who can afford to pay or who have private health insurance. In essence, everyone would be a private patient. It would be mandatory for all to have cover for a basic package of services - known as a basket - from one of a number of different insurers. The State would pay insurance premiums for those on low incomes and subsidise others. People who refused to take out cover would have the cost deducted from their earnings. (http://www.irishtimes.com/).

What has happened to UHI?

Seeing as 2016 has been and gone, what is the outlook for UHI? Political changes in Ireland have seen the health minister position change hands twice since the inception of UHI and damning cost analysis have led to the abandonment of the original UHI plan. In a briefing document prepared for Mr Harris (current Health Secretary since May 2016), Department of Health officials have warned that universal health insurance "is likely to increase the health expenditure" and these costs are "not acceptable". (http://www.irishexaminer.com/)

What has changed since 2012?

Some elements of the original UHI plan have been implemented. Free GP care for under sixes was rolled out in July of 2015 and was originally seen at the time as the first step in a roll-out of free GP care for all. In August of 2015 free GP care for over seventies was also introduced marking some positive steps towards free GP care for all although the timescale for this complete shift in highly uncertain.

On appointment, the current health minister Simon Harris stated, "We need to stop running the health service based on election cycles and individual ministerial ideology, and instead put in place once and for all a 10-year strategy with cross-party political and societal buy-in to build, develop, reform and modernise healthcare services for the future."

Ireland
Office 29 Clifton House
Fitzwilliam Street Lower
Dublin 2

Spain
Jardines de las Golondrinas
Ctra. de Cadiz Km 192
29604